THREE STUDIES IN LITERATURE

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BY

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NOTE

These Studies were originally introductory essays in volumes of selections from the prose writings of Jeffrey, Newman, and Arnold. The essay on Jeffrey has been rewritten and expanded. My thanks are due to Messrs. Ginn and Co. for the use of the essay on Jeffrey, and to Messrs. Henry Holt and Co. for leave to reprint the essays on Newman and Arnold.

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FRANCIS JEFFREY

I

Who now reads Jeffrey? Only those, it may be feared, who are intent on some scholarly purpose or victims of sharp necessity. Yet in 1809 Jeffrey could boast that his articles in the *Edinburgh Review* were read by fifty thousand thinking people within a month after publication. Jeffrey's reputation as a critic has run through a picturesquely varied course. During nearly the first half of the century he was, for many eminently intelligent Englishmen, an all but infallible authority in letters and whatever pertained to them. He was Horner's and Sydney Smith's "King Jamfray"; he was for Macaulay "more nearly a universal genius than any man of our time." Even Carlyle declared no critic since Jeffrey's day "worth naming beside him." And when that half-national institution, the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, required in its columns a discussion of the theory of art, Jeffrey it was who was called in as an authority and wrote the article on "Beauty" that, down to 1875, stood as representing authentic English opinion in matters of taste.

Even those who hated Jeffrey admitted his power. "Birds seldom sing," quoth Allan Cunningham, "when the kite is in the air, and bards dreaded the Judge Jeffrey of our day as much as political offenders dreaded the Judge Jeffreys of James the Second." Talfourd, Lamb's friend and editor, asserted of Jeffrey that "with little imagination, little genuine wit, and no clear view of any great and central principles of criticism, he . . . continued to dazzle, to astonish, and occasionally to delight multitudes of readers, and at one time to hold the temporary fate of authors in his hands."

By way of final testimony to the magnitude of Jeffrey's fame, Macaulay and Carlyle may be quoted at length in his praise. One of Macaulay's letters of 1828 deals wholly with his impressions of Jeffrey, at whose home he had just been staying; the tone of the letter is that of unmixed hero-worship; no details of the Scotch critic's appearance or habits or opinions are too slight to be sent to the Macaulay household in London. "He has twenty faces almost as unlike each other as my father's to Mr. Wilberforce's. . . . The mere outline of his face is insignificant. The expression is everything; and such power and variety of expression I never saw in any human countenance. . . . The flow of his kindness is quite inexhaustible. . . . His conversation is very much like his countenance and his voice, of im-

mense variety. . . . He is a shrewd observer; and so fastidious that I am not surprised at the awe in which many people seem to stand when in his company."[1] These are only a few of Macaulay's details and admiring comments. Nor did he outgrow this intense admiration. In April, 1843, he writes to Macvey Napier that he has read and reread Jeffrey's old articles till he knows them by heart; and in December, 1843, on the appearance of Jeffrey's collected essays, he expresses himself in almost unmeasured terms: "The variety and versatility of Jeffrey's mind seem to me more extraordinary than ever. . . . I do not think that any one man except Jeffrey, nay that any three men, could have produced such diversified excellence. . . . Take him all in all, I think him more nearly an universal genius than any man of our time."[2]

Macaulay, however, may not be wholly beyond suspicion as a witness in Jeffrey's favour. He himself had much of Jeffrey's dryness and positiveness of nature, was temperamentally limited in many of the same ways, and was, like Jeffrey, an ardent Whig of the Constitutional type; for all these reasons he may be thought prejudiced. In Carlyle, on the other hand, we have a witness who was as far as possible from sympathy with Jeffrey's neat little formulas in art and in poli-

[1] *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*, chap. 3.
[2] *Ibid.*, chap. 9.

tics, and who has never been accused of registering unduly charitable opinions of even his best friends. Yet of Jeffrey he says, "It is certain there has no Critic appeared among us since who was worth naming beside him; — and his influence, for good and for evil, in Literature and otherwise, has been very great. . . . His *Edinburgh Review* [was] a kind of Delphic Oracle, and Voice of the Inspired, for great majorities of what is called the 'Intelligent Public'; and himself regarded universally as a man of consummate penetration, and the *facile princeps* in the department he had chosen to cultivate and practise."[1]

How has it happened that Jeffrey's lustre, once so brilliant, has paled in our day into that of a fifth-rate luminary? Was his earlier reputation wholly undeserved? Or is the "dumb forgetfulness" that has overtaken him a real case of literary injustice? Probably Jeffrey is now oftenest remembered for his unluckily haughty reprimand to Wordsworth, "This will never do!" — a sentence which is popularly taken to be an incontestable proof of critical incapacity. Yet as regards the artistic worth of the *Excursion*, the poem against which Jeffrey was protesting, judges are at present nearer in agreement with Jeffrey than with Wordsworth. Ought not Jeffrey, the critic, then, to benefit somewhat from the latter-day reaction against overweening Romanticism?

[1] Carlyle's *Reminiscences*, II, 271.

Doubtless, Jeffrey's fate is in part merely an illustration of the transiency of critical fame. Jeffrey, like Rymer and John Dennis, has gone the deciduous way of all writers of literature about literature, save the few who have been actually themselves, in their prose, creators of beauty. Yet probably there is also something exceptional in Jeffrey's case, — in his earlier complete ascendency and in the later sorry disinheriting that has overtaken him. Jeffrey's reputation was really a composite affair, due fully as much to the timely-happy establishment of the *Edinburgh Review* as to his own personal cleverness, great as that was. On Jeffrey, the editor, was reflected all the shining success of the first brilliant English *Review*. To understand, then, the waxing and the waning of Jeffrey's literary reputation, a somewhat careful analysis will be needed not simply of his critical genius, but also of the methods for making that genius effective which fortune offered him and his own keen practical instincts worked out successfully. As for his individual worth as a critic, the truth will be found to lie, as so often happens, about midway between the eulogists and the cavillers. Judged even by present standards, Jeffrey was a notably effective critic; he made blunders not a few, but he was acute, entertaining, and suggestive, even when he went astray; he excelled in rapid analysis, apt illustration, and audacious satire. He developed critical method in two very

important directions, and seized upon and applied, with at least partial success, two critical principles, hardly recognized in England before his day, but thereafter more and more widely and fruitfully employed. All these are points, however, that need to be minutely dealt with and illustrated.

II

It was on Jeffrey's versatility — the universality of his genius — that Macaulay's comments in 1843 laid special stress. That versatility remains noteworthy for good or for ill to-day. No modern literary critic would venture on the vast range of subjects that Jeffrey, even in the seventy or eighty of his essays that he thought worth preserving, has magisterially dealt with. His *Collected Essays* are arranged under the following seven headings: General Literature; History; Poetry; Philosophy of the Mind, Metaphysics, and Jurisprudence; Prose Fiction; General Politics; Miscellaneous. Under all these headings the works of distinguished specialists are discussed, and the reviewer declaims and dogmatizes like an expert, whether he be holding forth on philosophy to Dugald Stewart or on politics and law to Jeremy Bentham, or on poetry to Wordsworth or Scott. Such confident universality is nowadays sure to suggest shallowness, and yet the fact remains that for twenty-five

years Jeffrey was able to write on this vast variety of topics so as to command the thorough respect even of his opponents, and so as not simply to avoid any scandalous misadventure through false information or inept judgments (unless in the case of Wordsworth), but to rule almost arbitrarily a great mass of public opinion in morals, in politics, and in literary and artistic theory. To carry through successfully so difficult a task is in itself a victory to be put to the credit of the audacious Scotch critic, even though his work prove not in all cases of permanent worth.

A rapid and pungent style and great adroitness and attractiveness in exposition were doubtless largely responsible for Jeffrey's constant success with his public. But, in addition to these formal excellences, Jeffrey was remarkably well equipped and well trained for the part of a universal genius. Instinct had been beforehand with him and led him to prepare himself during a good many years of faithful study for just the part he was to play. When he had to choose a profession he decided for the bar, and he was called as a barrister in 1796. But both before this decision and during his actual legal studies, he read widely and systematically by himself in general literature, political theory, history, and philosophy; and during all this patient, private reading, at Glasgow University, at Edinburgh, and afterwards at Oxford, he was busy, with canny Scotch diligence, at

note-books, in which facts and ideas and theorizings were recorded and worked out. His mind was conspicuously vivacious and alert, — swift to catch up and make its own new knowledge, whether about books or life. This keenness of intellectual scent was always characteristic of him. Even Matthew Arnold has conceded to him one trait of the ideal critic — *curiosity*. A very different commentator, Mrs. Carlyle, makes special mention, after a call from him, of his "dark, penetrating" eyes, that "had been taking note of most things in God's universe."

Besides the results of this patient self-discipline, and of this wide ranging and swiftly appropriating intellectual interest, Jeffrey had, in a very high degree, the barrister's power of seizing, comprehending, and controlling, quickly and surely, a vast mass of new facts. He could "get up" an unfamiliar subject with unsurpassable readiness and completeness. His mastery of his subject in a review-article seems often like the successful barrister's knowledge of his brief: he knows whatever he needs to know to carry the matter in hand triumphantly through.

His way of unfolding a subject is always deft and delightful to follow. He had a sure expository instinct. Point by point, the most complex problem takes on, under his treatment, at least a specious simplicity, and the most abstract theorem, alluring familiarity, and definiteness. He is gen-

erous with illustrations and examples and mischievous in giving them a satirical turn. Despite his Scotch bias towards theorizing, he knows and "hugs" his facts, and his discussions always keep close to experience.

His breadth of view is remarkable, if his work be compared with that of eighteenth-century critics. Whatever the book or question under discussion, Jeffrey lifts it into the region of general principles, and is not content with formal judgments of literary worth or with random comments on special points. He is really bent on setting up "a free play of ideas" over the literature and the modes of life that he criticises, and on orienting his readers as regards not simply the special work under discussion, but the whole field of art or of study to which it belongs. That his theories, at least in literary matters, were not always searching or profound, that they will not, in sweep and thoroughness, bear comparison with those, for example, of Coleridge, the great system-weaver of the Romanticists, is undoubtedly true. Yet even in literary theory Jeffrey, as will be presently shown, hit on some notable truths; he partially comprehended and applied the historical method for the study of literature; he worked out with Alison an interpretation of beauty, which, though false in its emphasis and distorted, recognized and illustrated with great acuteness one highly important and comparatively neglected source of æsthetic emotion; and, despite

much mistaken ridicule of Romantic poetry and much insensibility to its quintessential power and charm, he showed his critical insight in his protests against certain radical defects alike in the ethical and in the æsthetic theory of the Romanticists, — defects which, as Jeffrey contended and as modern criticism admits, do much to invalidate Romantic poetry, both as a criticism of life and as a permanently invigorating imaginative stimulus. But even apart from the absolute correctness or finality of Jeffrey's theorizing, his practice of raising criticism into the region of general principles and of examining the material worth of books even more searchingly than their barely formal qualities, was a renovating change in criticism, and at once gave new consideration and dignity to the work of the critic. Mind was at any rate fermenting in whatever Jeffrey wrote, and for the most part the writing of earlier reviewers had been a barren waste of words.

Finally, Jeffrey's style startled and challenged and terrified and amused, and through its briskness and audacity, its swift sparkle and gay bravado, its satire and banter, its impetuous fulness and unfailing wealth of fact and illustration fairly captivated a public that was used to the humdrum, conventional speech of penny-a-lining critics. There is a fine vein of mischief in Jeffrey that leads continually to very grateful ridicule of pedantry, dulness, and all kinds of absurdity.

Even the devoutest Wordsworthian will, if he be not an ingrained prig, relish Jeffrey's raillery at the expense of Wordsworth's occasional pompous ineptitude. And if Jeffrey's vivacity still seems amusing, how much more irresistible must his style have seemed before the days of Hazlitt and Lamb and Macaulay and Carlyle. His dash and wit and audacity were new in literary criticism, and for the time being seemed to the public almost more than mortal.

Whether or no all these qualities of Jeffrey's genius and style are those of the ideal literary critic, they were fitted to gain him success and renown as a brilliant, argumentative writer on literary topics. And, in point of fact, this is what Jeffrey really was; he was a typically well equipped and skilful middleman of ideas. He found an increasingly large Liberal or Whig public anxious to have its beliefs expressed plausibly, its feelings justified, and its taste made clear to itself and gently improved. The Whig "sheep looked up," and Jeffrey fed them. He did much the same work in general literary, social, and political theory that Macaulay did later in history. Macaulay's historical essays, also published in the *Edinburgh Review*, were, as Cotter Morison has pointed out, "great historical cartoons," specially adapted for the popularization of history, and specially suited to the knowledge and aspirations of an intelligent middle-class public. Jeffrey's essays in literature

had much this same character and value. They interpreted the freshest, most vital thought of the time, so far as possible in harmony with Whig formulas, and judged it by Whig standards; they made happily articulate Whig prejudices on all subjects, from the French Revolution to Wordsworth's peasant poetry. By their masterly exposition, their incisive argument, and their wit, they entertained even those whom they exasperated. Their success was prompt and unexampled.

III

It has already been hinted that the qualities of Jeffrey's genius and style, great as may have been their value for the work he accomplished, are not, when judged from the modern point of view, altogether those of the ideal literary critic. This is particularly true if appreciation be included as a vital part of the critic's task. Jeffrey rarely *appreciates* a piece of literature, interprets it imaginatively, lends himself to its peculiar charm, and expresses this charm through sympathetic symbolism. His readiness and his plausibility are not the only points in which Jeffrey the critic suggests Jeffrey the advocate. He has the defects as well as the merits of the lawyer in literature. He is always for or against his author; he is always making points. The intellectual interest preponderates in his critical work, and his discus-

sions often seem, particularly to a reader of modern impressionistic criticism, hard, unsympathetic, searchingly analytical, repellingly abstract and systematic. He is always on the watch; he never lends himself confidingly to his author and takes passively and gratefully the mood and the images his author suggests. He never loiters or dreams. He is full of business and bustle, and perpetually distracts his readers with his sense of the need of making definite progress. He is one of those responsible folk who believe that

> "Nothing of itself will come
> But we must still be seeking."

For delicate and subtle appreciation, then, of the best modern type it is useless to look in Jeffrey's essays.

Of course, historically, such criticism could hardly have been expected in 1803. The critical tradition that Jeffrey fell heir to was that of the dogmatists, — the tradition that came down from Ascham, the pedagogue, through the hands of the would-be autocrats, Rymer and Dennis, to Dr. Johnson. The theories of the dogmatists suffered many changes, but remained nevertheless true to one fundamental principle: the critic was to be accepted as an infallible judge in literature because of his familiarity with certain models or certain abstract rules, the imitation or the observance of which was essential to good art. The dogmatic

critic deemed himself lord of literature by a kind of divine right. Ascham believed in the plenary artistic inspiration of the Greek and Latin classics, and posed as the authentic interpreter of the sacred literary word. The pseudo-classical critics, Rymer and Dennis, based themselves also partly on authority, but even more upon reason; they pretended to rule by the divine right of pure logic. Their implicit postulate might be likened to Hobbes's theory in politics; they substantially held that the strongest must keep order in the commonwealth, and that in the literary commonwealth this duty fell to the intellectually strongest. Accordingly, these critics administered justice magisterially in accordance with a strict code of laws; they had laws for the epic poet, laws for the writer of comedy, laws for the satirist, laws for the writer of tragedy; the author of every new piece of literature was called up to the bar and reprimanded for the least illegality. In short, the dogmatic critic regarded himself and was generally regarded as able to apply absolute tests of merit to all literary work, and as the final authority on all doubtful matters of taste.

Now, Jeffrey was the inheritor of this tradition in criticism, and naturally adopted at times its tyrannical tone and manner towards public and authors. Yet, following his temperamental fondness for compromises, for middle parties and mediating measures, Jeffrey never tried formally to

defend this old doctrine or represented himself as an absolute lawgiver in literature. Nowhere does he lay down a complete set of principles, like the rules of Bossu for epic poetry, or those of Rapin for the drama, by which excellence in any form of literature may be absolutely tested. Such a high-and-dry Tory theory of criticism does not suggest itself to Jeffrey as tenable. He is a Whig in taste as in politics, and desires in both spheres the supremacy of a chosen aristocracy. In his essay on Scott's *Lady of the Lake* he declares the standard of literary excellence to reside in "the taste of a few . . . persons, eminently qualified, by natural sensibility and long experience and reflection, to perceive all beauties that really exist, as well as to settle the relative value and importance of all the different sorts of beauty." Jeffrey regards himself as one of the choicest spirits of this chosen aristocracy, and it is as the exponent of the best current opinion that he speaks on all questions of taste.

It follows that, when Jeffrey is dealing with purely literary questions, he is less argumentative than at other times, and that what has been said of his viewing every subject in the light of general principles is least applicable to his dogmatic essays on literature. When, for example, he attacks *Wilhelm Meister* or the *Excursion*, he does so simply and frankly in terms of his temperament. Wordsworth's mysticism baffles him, and he con-

demns it; Goethe's sordid realism and sentiment offend his man-of-the-world taste and he anathematizes them. His custom in such hostile criticisms is to let his own taste masquerade as that of "the judicious observer" or "the modern public." His faith in his own personal equation is unquestioning and devout. Whatever fails to fall in with his bias is a fair mark for his bitterest invective. Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, for example, is "sheer nonsense," "ludicrously unnatural," full of "pure childishness or mere folly," "vulgar and obscure," full of "absurdities and affectations." These terms are, for the most part, mere circumlocutions for Jeffrey's dislike, mere roundabout ways of saying that the book is not to his taste. As for coming to an understanding with author or reader about the ends of prose fiction or the best methods of reaching those ends, Jeffrey never thinks of such an attempt. He simply takes up various passages and declares he does not comprehend them, or does not fancy the subjects they treat of, or does not like the author's ideas or methods. He gives no reasons for his likes or dislikes, but is content to express them emphatically and picturesquely. This is, of course, dogmatism pure and simple, and a dogmatism, too, more irritating than the dogmatism that argues, for it seems more arbitrary and more challenging. Of this tone and method, Coleridge complains in the twenty-first chapter of his *Biographia Literaria*, when, in commenting on

current critical literature, he protests against "the substitution of assertion for argument" and against "the frequency of arbitrary and sometimes petulant verdicts."

But, irritating as is this pragmatic, unreasoning dogmatism, it is nevertheless plainly a step forward from the view that makes the critic absolute lawgiver in art. As the Whig position in politics is midway between absolute monarchy and democracy, so what we may term the Whig compromise in criticism stands midway between the tyranny of earlier critics and our modern freedom. The mere recognition of the fact that the critic speaks with authority only as representing a *coterie*, only as interpreting public opinion, is plainly a change for the better. The critic no longer regards himself as by divine right lord alike of public and authors; he no longer measures literary success solely by changeless, abstract formulas of excellence; he admits more or less explicitly that the taste of living readers, not rules drawn from the works of dead writers, must decide what in literature is good or bad. He still, to be sure, limits arbitrarily the circle whose taste he regards as a valid test; but it is plain that a new principle has implicitly been accepted, and that the way is opened for the development and recognition of all kinds of beauty and power the public may require.

Jeffrey himself, however, seems never to have suspected the conclusions that might legitimately

be drawn from the ideas that he was helping to make current. He seems to have had no qualm of doubt touching his right to dogmatize on the merits and defects of art as violently as a critic of the older school. In theory, he held that all artistic excellence is relative; but in practice, he never let this doctrine mitigate the severity of his judgments. He asserts in his review of *Alison on Taste* that "what a man feels distinctly to be beautiful, *is beautiful* to him"; and that so far as the individual is concerned all pleasure in art is equally real and justifiable. Yet this doctrine seems never to have paralyzed in the least his faith in the superior worth of his own kind of pleasure; and he upbraids Wordsworth and Coleridge just as indignantly for not ministering to that pleasure, as if he had some abstract standard of poetic excellence, of which he could prove they fell short.

When we try to define Jeffrey's taste and to determine just what he liked and disliked in literature, we find an odd combination of sympathies and antipathies. Mr. Leslie Stephen has spoken of him as in politics an eighteenth-century survival;[1] but this formula, apt as it is for his politics, scarcely applies to his taste in literature. The typical eighteenth-century man of letters was a pseudo-classicist; and beyond the pseudo-classical point of view Jeffrey had passed, just as cer-

[1] *Hours in a Library*, III, 176.

tainly as he had never reached the Romantic point of view. Of Pope, for example, he says: he is "much the best we think of the classical Continental school; but he is not to be compared with the masters — nor with the pupils — of that Old English one from which there had been so lamentable an apostasy." Addison he condemns for his "extreme caution, timidity, and flatness," and he declares that "the narrowness of his range in poetical sentiment and diction, and the utter want either of passion or of brilliancy, render it difficult to believe that he was born under the same sun with Shakespeare." These opinions are proof patent of Jeffrey's contempt for pseudo-classicism. Then, too, Jeffrey is, as he himself boasts, almost superstitious in his reverence for Shakespeare. More significant still is his admiration for other Elizabethan dramatists, like Beaumont, Fletcher, Ford, and Webster. "Of the old English dramatists," he assures us in his essay on *Ford*, "it may be said, in general, that they are more poetical, and more original in their diction, than the dramatists of any other age or country. Their scenes abound more in varied images, and gratuitous excursions of fancy. Their illustrations and figures of speech are more borrowed from rural life, and from the simple occupations or universal feelings of mankind. They are not confined to a certain range of dignified expressions, nor restricted to a particular assortment of imagery, beyond which it

is not lawful to look for embellishments." Finally, he even commends Coleridge's great favourite, Jeremy Taylor, as enthusiastically as Coleridge himself could do: "There is in any one of the prose folios of Jeremy Taylor," he asserts, "more fine fancy and original imagery — more brilliant conceptions and glowing expressions — more new figures, and new applications of old figures — more, in short, of the body and the soul of poetry, than in all the odes and the epics that have since been produced in Europe."

Such judgments as these mark Jeffrey as, at any rate, not an eighteenth-century survival; they must be duly borne in mind when a formula is being sought for his literary taste. Fully as significant, though in a different way, is the series of essays on the poet Crabbe. If the praise of the Elizabethans seems to argue an almost Romantic bias in Jeffrey and to suggest that after all his tastes are very like those of Wordsworth and Coleridge, the Crabbe essays at once reveal his antipathy to the men of the new age and show how far he is from even being willing to allow its prophets to prophesy in peace and obscurity.

Throughout his praise of Crabbe, Jeffrey is by implication condemning Wordsworth; nor does he confine himself to this roundabout method of attacking Romanticism. In the very first essay on Crabbe (1807), he turns aside from his subject to ridicule by name, "the Wordsworths, and the

Southeys, and Coleridges, and all that ambitious fraternity," and contrasts at great length Crabbe's sanity with Wordsworth's mysticism. "Mr. Crabbe exhibits the common people of England pretty much as they are"; whereas "Mr. Wordsworth and his associates . . . introduce us to beings whose existence was not previously suspected by the acutest observers of nature; and excite an interest for them — where they do excite any interest — more by an eloquent and refined analysis of their own capricious feelings, than by any obvious or intelligible ground of sympathy in their situation." With Crabbe, Jeffrey feels he is on solid ground, dealing with a man who sees life clearly and sensibly, as he himself sees it; and in his enthusiastic praise of the minute fidelity of Crabbe, of his uncompromising truth and realism, and of his freedom from all meretricious effects, from affectation, and from absurd mysticism, we have at once the measure of Jeffrey's poetic sensibility and the sure evidence of his inability to sympathize genuinely with "the Lakers."

Of course, for the classic passages expressing his impatience of the new movement, we must go to the essays on Wordsworth's *Excursion* and *White Doe*. Jeffrey's objections to the Lakers fall under four heads: First, the new poets are nonsensically mystical; secondly, they falsify life by showing it through a distorting medium of personal emotion, *i.e.* they are misleadingly subjective; thirdly, they

are guilty of grotesque bad taste in their democratic realism; fourthly, they are pedantically earnest and serious in their treatment of art, and inexcusably pretentious in their proclamation of a new gospel of life. Mysticism, intense individuality of feeling, naturalism, and "high seriousness," — these were the qualities that in the new art particularly exasperated Jeffrey; and inasmuch as these were the very qualities to which, in the eyes of its devotees, the new art owed its special potency, the division between Jeffrey and the Romanticists was sufficiently deep and irreconcilable.

Wordsworth's transcendentalism, his intense spiritual consciousness, his inveterate fashion of apprehending all nature as instinct with spiritual force and of converting "this whole Of suns and worlds and men" and "all that it inherits" into a series of splendid imaginative symbols of moral and spiritual truth, — these qualities of Wordsworth's genius were for his admirers among his most characteristic sources of power, and tended to place him as an imaginative interpreter of life far above those Elizabethan writers whom Jeffrey, too, in opposition to the eighteenth century, pretended to reverence. But these were just the qualities in Wordsworth's genius that seemed to Jeffrey most reprehensible. After quoting a typical passage where Wordsworth's transcendentalism finds free utterance, Jeffrey exclaims: "This is a fair sample of that rapturous mysticism which eludes all comprehen-

sion, and fills the despairing reader with painful giddiness and terror." Jeffrey's woe is by no means feigned. We cannot doubt that his whole mental life was perturbed by such of Wordsworth's poems as the great *Ode*, and that it was an act of self-preservation on his part to burst into indignant ridicule and violent protest. To find a man of Wordsworth's age and literary experience deliberately penning such bewildering stanzas and expressing such unintelligible emotions, shook for the moment Jeffrey's faith in his own little, well-ordered universe, and then, as he recovered from his earthquake, escaped from its vapours, and felt secure once more in the clear, every-day light of common sense, led him into fierce invective against the cause of his momentary panic.

Hardly less impatient is Jeffrey of Wordsworth's subjectivity than of his mysticism. Why cannot Wordsworth feel about life as other people feel about it, as any well-bred, cultivated man of the world feels about it? When such a man sees a poor old peasant gathering leeches in a pool, he pulls out his purse, gives him a shilling, and walks on, speculating about the state of the poor law; Wordsworth, on the contrary, bursts into a strange fit of raving about Chatterton and Burns, and "mighty poets in their misery dead," and then in some mysterious fashion converts the peasant's stolidity into a defence against these gloomy thoughts. This way of treating the peasant seems

to Jeffrey utterly unjustifiable, both because of its grotesque mysticism, and because it thrusts a personal *motif* discourteously into the face of the public and falsifies ludicrously the peasant's character and life. Wordsworth has no right, Jeffrey insists, to treat the peasant merely as the symbol of his own peculiar mood. Here, as in his protest against Wordsworth's mysticism, Jeffrey pleads for common sense and the commonplace; he is the type of what Lamb calls "the Caledonian intellect," which rejects scornfully ideas that cannot be adequately expressed in good plain terms, and grasped "by twelve men on a jury."

Crabbe's superiority to the Lakers lies for Jeffrey chiefly in the fact that he has no idiosyncrasies, though he has many mannerisms; he expresses no new theories and no peculiar emotions in his portrayal of common life. Hence his choice of vulgar subjects is endurable — even highly commendable. His peasants are the well-known peasants of every-day England, with whose hard lot it behoves an enlightened Whig to sympathize — from a distance. But a realism that, like Wordsworth's, professes to find in these poor peasants the deepest spiritual insight and the purest springs of moral life, is simply for Jeffrey grotesque in its maladroitness and confusion of values. Sydney Smith used to say, "If I am doomed to be a slave at all, I would rather be the slave of a king than a cobbler." And this same

prejudice against any topsy-turvy reassignment of values was largely responsible for Jeffrey's dislike of Wordsworth's peasants and of his treatment of common life. If peasants keep their places, as Crabbe's peasants do, they may perfectly well be brought into the precints of poetry; but to exalt them into types of moral virtue and into heavenly messengers of divine truth, is to "make tyrants of cobblers." Jacobinism in art, as in politics, is to Jeffrey detestable.

In fact, all the pretensions of the new school to illustrate by its art a new gospel of life were intensely disagreeable to Jeffrey. As long as Romanticism seemed chiefly decorative, as in Scott or Keats, Jeffrey could tolerate it or even delight in it. But the moment it began, whether in Byron or Wordsworth, to take itself seriously, and to struggle to express new moral and spiritual ideals, Jeffrey protested. Just here lies the key to what some critics have found a rather perplexing problem, — the reasons for the varying degrees of Jeffrey's sympathy with the poets of his day. Let the poet remain a mere master of the revels, or a mere magician calling up by his incantations in verse a gorgeous phantasmagoria of sights and sounds for the delectation of idle readers, and Jeffrey will consent to admire him and will commend his fertility of invention, his wealth of imagination, his "rich lights of fancy," and "his flowers of poetry." Keats's luxuriant pictures of Greek life in *Endym-*

ion, Jeffrey finds irresistible in the "intoxication of their sweetness" and in "the enchantments which they so lavishly present." Moore and Campbell, he regards as the most admirable of the Romanticists, and their works as the very best of the somewhat extravagant modern school. Writing in 1829, he arranges recent poets in the following order, according to the probable duration of their fame: "The tuneful quartos of Southey are already little better than lumber: — and the rich melodies of Keats and Shelley, — and the fantastical emphasis of Wordsworth, — and the plebeian pathos of Crabbe, are melting fast from the field of our view. The novels of Scott have put out his poetry. Even the splendid strains of Moore are fading into distance and dimness . . . and the blazing star of Byron himself is receding from its place of pride. . . . The two who have the longest withstood this rapid withering of the laurel . . . are Rogers and Campbell; neither of them, it may be remarked, voluminous writers, and both distinguished rather for the fine taste and consummate elegance of their writings, than for that fiery passion, and disdainful vehemence, which seemed for a time to be so much more in favour with the public." Now a glance at Jeffrey's list of poets makes it clear that those for whom he prophesies lasting fame are either pseudo-classicists or decorative Romanticists, and that those whose day he declares to be over are for the most part poets whose

Romanticism was a vital principle. Rogers is, of course, a genuine representative of the pseudo-classical tradition, with all its devotion to form, its self-restraint, its poverty of imagination, and its distrust of passion. Moore, whom Jeffrey places late in his list of fading luminaries, and Campbell, whom he finds most nearly unchanging in lustre, are both in a way Romanticists; but they are alike in seeking chiefly for decorative effects and in not taking their art too seriously. So long, then, as the fire and the heat of Romanticism spent themselves merely in giving imaginative splendour to style, Jeffrey could tolerate the movement, and could even regard it with favour, as a return to that power and fervour and wild beauty that he had taught himself to admire in Elizabethan poetry. But the moment the new energy was suffered to penetrate life itself and to convert the conventional world of dead fact, through the vitalizing power of passion, into a genuinely new poetic material, then Jeffrey stood aghast at what seemed to him a return to chaos. Byron with his fiery bursts of selfish passion, Wordsworth with his steadily glowing consciousness of the infinite, and Shelley with his "white heat of transcendentalism," were all alike for Jeffrey portentously dangerous forces and unhealthy phenomena.

For the most part, in his attacks upon Romantic poetry, Jeffrey indulges in little philosophizing; he is content with wit, satire, epigram, and clever

self-assertion. And yet, in the last analysis, there is a vital connection between his rejection of Romanticism and his abstract theorizings on beauty, — small pains as he has taken to bring out this obscure relationship. A complete account of his temperament and taste ought to show how the same instincts that led to his hostility to Wordsworth and Coleridge expressed themselves formally, and tried to justify themselves, through the theory of Beauty which he worked out with Alison's help.

According to Jeffrey's account of the matter, a beautiful object owes its beauty to its power to call up in the observer latent past experiences of pleasure and pain. These little fragments of past joy and sorrow gather closely round the object and blend in a kind of blurred halo of delight which we call beauty. Suppose that an observer looks out upon a luxuriant country landscape; the winding road calls back to him (though without his conscious recognition of the fact) leisurely afternoon drives; the green meadows suggest (again obscurely) past sympathy with shepherds and grazing flocks and rustic prosperity; the cottages surreptitiously wake memories of home joys and content about the hearthstone. And so the imagination garners out of the summer landscape a myriad evanescent associations with past life, which, too slight and swift to be detected separately by thought, nevertheless unite like the harmonics of a musical note to produce the peculiar character that we call

beauty. This being the nature of beauty, it follows that every individual's past will limit and create for him his beauty in the present; his foregone pleasures and pains will alone make possible those echoes of intense feeling which in the present combine into the single chord of beauty. According to every man's past, then, is his present sense of beauty; and as no two men have the same past, no two men can have the same perceptions of beauty in the present.

Jeffrey accepts unhesitatingly the conclusions involved in this doctrine, and asserts that beauty is wholly relative; that whatever seems to a man beautiful is for him beautiful; and that no sensible debate is possible over the legitimacy of the beauty that a man's special temperament manufactures. So long as a man confines himself to *enjoying* beauty, he remains beyond criticism in the magic region of his own private experience. But the moment he offers himself as a creator or interpreter of beauty for others, he must take into account the scope and nature of common experience and try to appeal imaginatively to associations which are likely to be in the hearts of all. This is precisely, Jeffrey once or twice implies, what Romanticists like Wordsworth and Coleridge failed to do. They tried to impose on the public their own curiously whimsical associations of pleasure and pain; they were incredibly presumptuous in their belief that their own quaint, country-side blisses and sorrows

and their own droll exaltations and despairs over peddlers and beggars and leech-gatherers must have universal value for mankind. Here for Jeffrey lay the wilful and colossal egotism of Romantic art; and once more we find him posing as the foe of idiosyncrasy and arbitrary whim, and as the representative of a cultivated aristocracy of intelligence and social experience and taste, who, after all, have something like a common fund of feelings and associations on which art can draw.

As for the actual worth of Jeffrey's theory of beauty, its fault lies in trying to stretch into a universal formula what is really only a partial explanation of the facts. The beauty that Jeffrey lays stress on — the kind of beauty that comes from the suggestiveness of objects — is duly recognized nowadays under the name of beauty of *expression*. The possible origin of beauty through association of ideas had not been thoroughly considered before the days of Jeffrey and Alison, and their work was therefore new and historically important. But beside beauty that comes from this source, — beside beauty of expression, — there are beauty of form and beauty of material; neither of these is recognized by Jeffrey as an independent variety, and examples of each he tries, with really heroic ingenuity, to reduce to beauty of expression. The beauty of a Greek temple is explained as depending solely on a swift, unconscious recognition of the stability, costliness, splendour, and antiquity of

the structure. The beauty of special colours or of chords of music is derived, not at all from the intrinsic quality of the sensations, — the hue or the musical sound, — but wholly from subtle associations with past pleasure and pain. Thus Jeffrey's theory becomes distorted and misleading in spite of the truthfulness of much of his observation and the real subtlety and acuteness of many of his interpretations. The quintessential in art, the pleasure that art gives through pure form and the inexplicable ministry of sensation, Jeffrey is least sensitive to, and is continually looking askance at and trying to forget or to account for as merely disguised human sympathy.

Besides the light it throws on Jeffrey's quarrel with Romanticism, his theory of beauty is of special significance because it emphasizes the genuineness and intensity of his ethical interest. All artistic pleasure is for Jeffrey merely human sympathy in masquerade — past love for one's fellows, delicately revived in the music of art. The only man, then, who can have a wide range of artistic pleasure is he who in the past has shared generously in the lives of his comrades. Holding this theory of art, Jeffrey in his literary criticism naturally laid great stress on the ethical qualities of books and authors. Accordingly, in the preface to his *Collected Essays*, Jeffrey claims special credit for his frequent use of the ethical point of view. "If I might be permitted farther, to state, in what

particular department, and generally, on account of what, I should most wish to claim a share of those merits, I should certainly say, that it was by having constantly endeavoured to combine Ethical precepts with Literary Criticism, and earnestly sought to impress my readers with a sense, both of the close connection between sound intellectual attainments and the higher elements of duty and enjoyment; and of the just and ultimate subordination of the former to the latter. The praise, in short, to which I aspire, and to merit which I am conscious that my efforts were most constantly directed, is, that I have, more uniformly and earnestly than any preceding critic, made the Moral tendencies of the works under consideration a leading subject of discussion."

This "proud claim," as Jeffrey calls it, seems amply justified when we compare Jeffrey's essays either with the critical essays in the earlier Reviews, or with the more formal and elaborate critical essays of the eighteenth century. Even Dr. Johnson with all his didacticism had little notion of extracting from a piece of literature the subtle spirit of good or of evil by which it draws men this way or that way in conduct. An obvious infringement of good morals in speech or in plot he was sure to condemn, and a formal inculcation of moral truth he was sure to recognize and approve. But neither in Johnson, nor anywhere else before Jeffrey, do we find a critic constantly attempting to detect

and define the moral atmosphere that pervades the whole work of an author, and to determine the relation between this moral atmosphere and the author's personality as man and as artist. To have perceived the value of this ethical criticism, to have practised it skilfully, and to have fostered a taste for it, these are true claims to distinction; and Jeffrey's services in these directions have been too often forgotten. The greater breadth of view of later critics and their surer appreciation of ethical values should not be allowed to deprive Jeffrey of his honour as a pioneer in ethical criticism.

For still another innovation in critical methods, Jeffrey was at least partly responsible. He was among the earliest English critics to see the importance for the study of literature of the historical point of view and to take into close account, in the study of an author or of a whole literature, the social environment. Not that Jeffrey was one of the original minds who first conceived of the historical method of study in its application to art, and worked out for themselves conceptions of literature as a growth and development and as dependent upon the spirit of the age and upon social conditions. Jeffrey, it can hardly be doubted, was merely a clever borrower. Long before his day, the principles underlying the historical conception of literature had been worked out in Germany, and had been applied by Herder and Goethe, and their disciples, for the solution of problems

in criticism. Of this German theorizing Jeffrey can hardly have had direct knowledge. But to Madame de Staël, who was an adept in German speculation, Jeffrey probably owed much, — both to her teaching and to her example. Her *De la littérature considérée dans ses rapports avec les institutions sociales* had appeared in France in 1800, and her *De l'Allemagne*, a study of German life and literature conceived throughout in strict harmony with the principles of the historical method, was published in 1810. Now it is in 1811 that an unmistakable broadening of method may be discerned in Jeffrey's literary criticism. His essay on Ford's *Dramatic Works* (August, 1811) is remarkable for its rapid survey of the whole development of English literature, its brilliant generalizations as regards the characteristics of such definite periods as that of the Restoration, and its fairly successful attempts to account for these characteristics as the outcome in each case of the social conditions of the time. Before 1811, or at any rate before 1810, Jeffrey never gets, in his study of an author, beyond the biographical point of view. He may consider psychological questions, — the characteristics of an author's mind that have impressed themselves on his book, or the nature of the public taste to which literature of a certain kind caters. But the sociological origin of a literary school or a writer has not before that time troubled Jeffrey. After the *Ford* essay the historical and the socio-

logical points of view are used rather frequently, though it must be admitted with uncertain success and not with entire loyalty.

Perhaps Jeffrey's most interesting actual discussion of the historical method occurs in the introduction to his essay on *Wilhelm Meister,* written in 1825. In this introduction he tries to classify the influences that mould literature and guide its development, and his formulas are curiously suggestive of the much later and rather famous theorizing of the French critic, Taine. Jeffrey does not recognize race — the first of Taine's forces; "human nature," Jeffrey asserts, "is everywhere fundamentally the same." But for Taine's two other sets of forces which he groups under the names *moment* and *milieu,* close equivalents may be found in Jeffrey's formulas. "The circumstances," he asserts, "which have distinguished [literature] into so many local varieties . . . may be divided into two great classes, — the one embracing all that relates to the newness or antiquity of the society to which they belong, or, in other words, to the stage which any particular nation has attained in that progress from rudeness to refinement, in which all are engaged; the other comprehending what may be termed the accidental causes by which the character and condition of communities may be affected; such as their government, their relative position as to power and civilization to neighbouring countries, their prevailing occupations, deter-

mined in some degree by the capabilities of their soil and climate." Of these principles, Jeffrey goes on through a half-dozen paragraphs to make more special application; he describes certain kinds of literature, or certain characteristics of literature, that are apt to correspond to certain stages of civilization; he considers hastily some of the qualities impressed upon literature by different sorts of political institutions. All this general discussion, though decidedly in the air, is true and suggestive; it shows that by 1825 Jeffrey had a good deal of insight into the general theory of the dependence of literature on society. It must not be forgotten, however, in estimating Jeffrey's originality, that even in England Coleridge and Hazlitt had, for a good many years before the date of this *Wilhelm Meister* essay, been applying the historical method with insight and power for the explanation of literary problems.

In point of fact, Jeffrey is usually much more impressive when he talks abstractly about the historical method than when he tries to apply it specifically. He is specially apt to be unhistorical when he treats of the beginnings either of literature or of institutions. He lacked the knowledge of facts which alone could render possible a fruitful historical conception. His construction of early periods is always *a priori* in terms of a cheap psychology. His account, in the essay on *Leckie*, of the origin of government, should be compared

with his description of the earliest attempts at poetic composition. In both cases he has a great deal to say about what "it was natural" for the earliest experimenters in each kind of work to aim at and to effect, and substantially nothing to say of the actual facts as determined by investigation. Moreover, these earliest experimenters are for Jeffrey marvellously like eighteenth-century *connoisseurs*, confronting consciously, and trying to solve reflectively, intricate problems in art or in politics. This view is, of course, unhistorical, and illustrates the difficulty Jeffrey had in escaping from old ways of thought.

Finally, Jeffrey never applies the historical method successfully to the study of any contemporary piece of literature. In the essay on *Wilhelm Meister*, for example, the general account of the principles that underlie historical criticism is fluent and clear; but the change is abrupt and disastrous when Jeffrey turns to the particular discussion of Goethe's novels. Far from being historical or scientific, or trying to trace out in Goethe's work the significant forces that were shaping contemporary German life, Jeffrey merely gives himself over to railing at whatever jars on his personal taste. In short, half the essay is scientific and half purely dogmatic, and the two halves have scarcely any logical connection. Sad to say, Jeffrey nearly always bungled or faltered like this when trying to use the historical method,

particularly when trying to interpret the literature of his own time. Other instances of his short-sightedness or clumsiness are to be found in his treatment of Byron and Wordsworth. He missed entirely the meaning of Byron's savage revolt against the conventionalism of eighteenth-century moral ideals, and he was equally unable to understand Wordsworth's high conservatism. Perhaps the most damaging accusation that can be brought against Jeffrey, as a critic, is inability to read and interpret the age in which he lived.

Jeffrey's imperfect grasp of the historical method is shown in one other way: he never realized that there was any conflict between his work as a dogmatic critic and his work as a scientific student of literature, or had a premonition of the blighting effect that the spread of historical conceptions of literature was ultimately to have on the prestige of the dogmatic critic. More and more, since Jeffrey's day, criticism has concerned itself with the scientific explanation and the interpretation of literature; less and less has it posed as the ultimate science of right thinking and right doing in literary art. This change has been brought about partly by the Romantic movement with its fostering of individualism in art, and partly through the development of historical conceptions in all departments of thought. Both these forces were in full play during Jeffrey's life, and of neither did he at all measure the scope or significance.

Regarded, then, from a modern point of view, Jeffrey, as a literary critic, takes shape somewhat as follows: As an appreciator he is sadly to seek, owing largely to over-intellectualism and disputatiousness. As a dogmatic critic he is even yet thoroughly readable because of his dashing style, his deft and ready handling, his shrewd common sense, and his sincerity; he expressed brilliantly the tastes and antipathies of a large circle of cultivated people of considerable social distinction, who, while not peculiarly artistic or literary, read widely and intelligently, and felt keenly and delicately, though within a somewhat limited range. Even in his dogmatic criticism, however, his faults are obvious; his dogmatism is peremptory; his tone, often bitter; and his prejudices are as scarlet. On the other hand, for giving a strong ethical trend to literary criticism, he deserves all honour. His social sympathies were intense and alert; they fixed the character of his whole theory of beauty, and continually expressed themselves in his comments upon books and authors. Through his persistently ethical interpretations of literature, he really enlarged the borders of literary criticism. As for his historical criticism, it cannot be said to have much permanent value. Into the general theory on which the use of the historical method rests, Jeffrey shows considerable insight; but he was by nature and by training a dogmatist, not a scientific student of

fact. Though his theorizings led him to believe speculatively in the relativity of beauty, and though he recognized abstractly that literature must vary from age to age as the time-spirit varies, yet he rarely let these convictions affect his tone or method in the treatment of literature; he is as round and intolerant in his blame of Addison or Pope as if he had never been within seeing distance of the historical point of view. In short, the disinterestedness of science was foreign to Jeffrey's nature; he was primarily and distinctively, not an investigator or interpreter, but a censor bent on praise or blame.

These very characteristics of his criticism, however, were of a kind to bring Jeffrey, in 1803, great glory. With some disguise until 1809, when the Tory *Quarterly Review* was founded, undisguisedly thereafter, Jeffrey was the great Whig champion in all that pertained to letters. From a partisan critic, audacious and brilliant dogmatism was just what was sure to win the widest hearing. Moreover, in accounting for Jeffrey's enormous popularity, the trashiness and insipidity of earlier review-writing must be kept in mind. Reviewing had been the pet occupation of Grub street; penny-a-liners had impressed upon criticism all their own unloveliness and feebleness; review articles seemed to issue from under-fed, torpid brains and anæmic bodies. Jeffrey's reviewing was the very incarnation of health, vigour, and prosperity.

Finally, Jeffrey profited in name and fame more than it is easy now to compute from the happy opportuneness of a new literary form, a literary form that was made possible through the establishment of the *Edinburgh Review*. This Review differed in many of its business arrangements and in its mode of publication from preceding Reviews; it was established in accordance with a new conception of the scope of review-writing, and of the relation of reviewers to the public. As the result of this new conception and these new relations, literary criticism, which had hitherto been merely more or less ingenious talk about technical matters, was transformed into the earnest and vigorous discussion of literature as the expression of all that was significant and absorbing in the life of the time. And as still further results of the new policy, reviewing and reviewers came into hitherto unknown honour; the *Edinburgh Review* was adored or was hated and feared throughout the length and breadth of the land, and Jeffrey was universally regarded as demonic in his versatility, brilliancy, penetration, and vigour. Much of Jeffrey's great prestige as a critic must be set down as due to his having long stood as the visible symbol of the success of the new style of reviewing.

IV

The story of the foundation of the *Edinburgh Review* has been told so often as hardly to bear

repeating. Enough of the facts, however, must be gone over again to make clear the change that the new periodical wrought in reviewing and in the relations between critics and the public.

The classical account of the origin of the *Review* is Sydney Smith's and is to be found in the Preface to his collected *Works;* it has been reproduced in Lord Cockburn's *Life of Jeffrey*[1] and in the *Life and Times of Lord Brougham.*[2] With his usual crabbedness Brougham disputes a few minor details, but he leaves the substantial accuracy of "Sydney's" story unimpeached.

The idea of the new *Review* was Sydney Smith's. The most important conspirators were Sydney, Jeffrey, Francis Horner, and Brougham. The plot was discussed and matured in Jeffrey's house in Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh. Sydney Smith's famous proposal of a motto, *Tenui musam meditamur avena,* "We cultivate literature on a little oatmeal," was rejected; the "sage Horner's" suggestion was adopted, — a line from Publius Syrus, *Judex damnatur cum nocens absolvitur,* which foretold the righteous severity of tone that was to characterize the *Review.* The first number was to have appeared in June, 1802, but, owing to dilatory contributors and Jeffrey's faintheartedness, was seri-

[1] Lord Cockburn's *Life of Jeffrey* (ed. Philadelphia, 1852), I, 101 ff.

[2] *The Life and Times of Lord Brougham* (ed. New York, 1871), I, 176 ff.

ously delayed; it finally appeared in October, 1802, under the supervision of Sydney Smith. After the publication of the first number Jeffrey was formally appointed editor, and, with some hesitation, accepted the post.

The success of the *Review* was from the start beyond all expectation. "The effect," says Lord Cockburn, "was electrical. And instead of expiring, as many wished, in their first effort, the force of the shock was increased on each subsequent discharge. It is impossible for those who did not live at the time, and in the heart of the scene, to feel, or almost to understand the impression made by the new luminary, or the anxieties with which its motions were observed." Lord Brougham's account of the matter is no less emphatic. "The success was far beyond any of our expectations. It was so great that Jeffrey was utterly dumbfounded, for he had predicted for our journal the fate of the original *Edinburgh Review*, which, born in 1755, died in 1756, having produced only two numbers! The truth is, the most sanguine among us, even Smith himself, could not have foreseen the greatness of the first triumph, any more than we could have imagined the long and successful career the *Review* was afterwards to run, or the vast reforms and improvements in all our institutions, social as well as political, it was destined to effect."

The subscription list of the *Review* grew within six years from 1750 to 9000; and by 1813 it num-

bered more than 12,000. The importance of these figures will be better understood when the reader recollects that in 1816 the London *Times* sold only 8000 copies daily. Moreover, it should be remembered that one copy of a magazine went much further then than it goes now, and did service in more than a single household. In 1809 Jeffrey boasted that the *Review* was read by 50,000 thinking people within a month after it was printed; doubtless this was a perfectly sound estimate.

Various causes have been suggested as contributing to the instant and phenomenal success of the *Review*, — the puzzling anonymity of its articles, its magisterial tone, the audacity of its attacks, what Horner calls its "scurrility," the novelty of its Scotch origin. All these causes doubtless had their influence. More important still, however, were the wit, the knowledge, and the originality of the brilliant contributors that Jeffrey rallied round him. Writing to his brother in July, 1803, Jeffrey thus describes his fellow-workers: "I do not think you know any of my associates. There is the sage Horner, however, whom you have seen, and who has gone to the English bar with the resolution of being Lord Chancellor; Brougham, a great mathematician, who has just published a book upon the Colonial Policy of Europe, which all you Americans should read; Rev. Sydney Smith and P. Elmsley, two Oxonian priests, full of jokes and erudition; my excellent little Sanscrit

Hamilton, who is also in the hands of Bonaparte at Fontainebleau; Thomas Thomson and John Murray, two ingenious advocates; and some dozen of occasional contributors, among whom the most illustrious, I think, are young Watt of Birmingham and Davy of the Royal Institution."[1] Many of these names are now forgotten, but those of Sydney Smith, Brougham, Horner, and Davy speak for themselves and are guarantees of brilliancy of style, originality of treatment, and vigorous thought.

The editor and the contributors, then, must receive their full share of credit for the success of the new *Review;* but their ability alone can hardly account for a success that converted the "blue and yellow" into a national institution. To explain a success so permanent and far-reaching, we must look beyond editor and contributors and consider the relation of the *Review* to its social environment. The *Edinburgh Review* came into being in answer to a popular need; it developed a new literary form to meet this need; and its business arrangements were such as enabled the cleverest and most suggestive writers to adapt their work to the requirements of the reading public more readily and more effectively than ever before. The meaning of these assertions will grow clearer as we consider the difference between the *Edinburgh Review* and earlier English Reviews.

[1] Lord Cockburn's *Life of Jeffrey*, II, 64.

V

Prior to 1802 there were two standard Reviews in Great Britain, — the *Monthly Review* and the *Critical Review*. Minor Reviews there had been in plenty, of longer or shorter life; but these two periodicals had pushed beyond their competitors and were regarded as the best of their kind. The *Monthly Review* had been founded in 1749 by Ralph Griffiths, a bookseller; it was Whig in politics and Low Church in religion. Its rival, the *Critical Review*, of which Smollett was for many years editor, had been founded in 1756, and was Tory and High Church. These Reviews were alike in form and in ostensible aim; they were published monthly, were made up of unsigned articles of moderate length, and professed to give competent accounts of the qualities of all new books. But though thus apparently worthy predecessors of the great Reviews with which nineteenth-century readers are familiar, they were really quite unlike them in general policy, in scope and style, and in influence. They were merely booksellers' organs, under the strict supervision of booksellers, and often edited by booksellers. They were used persistently and systematically, though, of course, discreetly, to further the bookseller's business schemes, to quicken the sale in case of a slow market, and to damage the publications of rivals. They were written for the most part by drudges

and penny-a-liners, who worked under the orders of the bookseller like slaves under the lash of the slave-driver. These characteristics of the older Reviews may be best illustrated by a brief account of the methods in accordance with which Griffiths, the editor of the *Monthly*, conducted his *Review*, and by some choice anecdotes of his treatment of subordinates.

Griffiths was originally a bookseller; and, though he was able later to retire from this business and to devote himself wholly to the management of his *Review*, he retained still the instincts of a petty tradesman, and kept his eye on the state of the market like a skilful seller of perishable wares. Of scholarship, of genuine taste, and literary ability he had next to nothing; but he had shrewd common sense, sound business instincts, tact in dealing with men, readiness to bully or to fawn as might be needful, and unlimited patience in scheming for the commercial success of his venture.

His dealings with Goldsmith between 1755 and 1765, and with William Taylor of Norwich between 1790 and 1800, illustrate his narrow policy in the conduct of the *Monthly* and his tyranny towards contributors. Goldsmith, he by turns bullied and bribed according as poor Goldsmith was more or less in need of money. On one occasion he became Goldsmith's security with his tailor for a new suit of clothes on condition that Goldsmith at once write four articles for the *Review;*

these articles were turned out to order, and appeared in December, 1758. On Goldsmith's failing to pay his tailor's bill in the specified time, Griffiths demanded the return of the suit and also of the books; and when he found that Goldsmith had pawned the books, he wrote him abusively, terming him sharper and villain, and threatening him with jail. In 1759, on the appearance of Goldsmith's first book, Griffiths ordered one of his hacks, the notorious Kenrick, to ridicule the work, and to make a personal attack on the author. These orders were faithfully carried out in the next number of the *Monthly Review*.[1]

With William Taylor of Norwich Griffiths took a very different tone. Taylor was one of the few men of breeding and of parts who, before 1802, condescended to write for Reviews, and he was moreover for many years the great English authority on German literature. For these reasons, Griffiths always used him with the utmost tenderness, and, even when giving him orders or refusing his articles, took a flattering tone of deference and admiration. On one occasion Taylor demanded an increase of pay; Griffiths's answer gives a very instructive glimpse of the relations between the bookseller-editor and his hack-writers. The "gratuity" for review work, Griffiths assures Taylor, had been settled fifty years before at two guineas a sheet of sixteen printed pages, "a sum

[1] Forster's *Goldsmith* (ed. London, 1848), p. 170.

not then deemed altogether puny," and in the case of most writers had since remained unchanged, although there had been certain "allowed exceptions in favour of the most difficult branches of the business." These exceptions, however, had tended to cause much jealousy and heart-burning among the contributors; for "it could not be expected that those labourers in the vineyard, who customarily executed the less difficult branches of the culture, would ever be cordially convinced that *their* merits and importance were inferior to any." After these laborious explanations Griffiths agrees to raise Taylor's compensation to three guineas per sheet of sixteen printed pages, though he expressly points out that by so doing he risks "exciting jealousy in the corps, similar, perhaps, to what happened among the vine-dressers, Matt., chap. xx." "If objections arise," he shrewdly continues, "we must resort for consolation to a list of candidates for the next vacancy, for in the literary harvest there is never any want of reapers."[1] Griffiths's slave-driving propensities show clearly through the thin disguise of politic words. Plainly he feels himself absolute master of the minds and wills of an indefinite number of penny-a-liners; and it is on these penny-a-liners that he resolves to depend for the great mass of his articles.

The evil influence of the publisher's despotism ran through the *Review* and vitiated all its judg-

[1] J. W. Robberd's *Life of William Taylor*, I, 130–132.

ments. The editor-publisher prescribed to his hacks what treatment a book should receive. Sometimes this was with a view to the market. "I send also the *Horæ Bibilicæ* at a venture," writes Griffiths to Taylor, " . . . it signifies not much whether we notice it or not, as it is not *on sale.*"[1] The italics are Griffiths's own. Sometimes, the publisher-editor merely wanted to favour a friend or injure an enemy. Griffiths's dictation in the case of Goldsmith's first book has already been noted. On another occasion Griffiths sent a copy of Murphy's *Tacitus* to Taylor with the following significant suggestion: "One thing I have to mention, *entre nous,* that Mr. M. is *one of us,* and that it is a rule in our society for the members to behave with due decorum toward each other, whenever they appear at their own bar as *authors,* out of their own critical province. If a kingdom (like poor France at present) be divided against itself, 'how shall that kingdom stand'?"[2] If Griffiths ventured on this dictation with a man of Taylor's standing and independence, his tyranny over his regular dependents must have been complete and relentless.

As a result, review-writing became purely hackwork. The reviewer had no voice of his own in his criticism; what little individuality he might, in his feebleness, have put into his work, had he

[1] J. W. Robberd's *Life of William Taylor*, I, 139.
[2] *Ibid.*, I, 122.

been left to himself, disappeared under the eye of his taskmaster. He became a mere machine, praising and blaming perfunctorily and conventionally, at the bidding of the editor-publisher. Mawkish adulation or random abuse became the staple of critical articles; and in neither kind of work did the critic rise above the dead level of hopeless mediocrity.

A final result of this whole system of review-managing and hack-writing was unwillingness on the part of men of position to have anything to do with review-writing. If a man criticised books in a Review, he felt that he was putting himself on a level with Kenrick, Griffiths's notorious hireling, who had been imprisoned for libel, with Kit Smart, who had bound himself to a bookseller for ninety-nine years, and with other like wretches. William Taylor of Norwich was one of the few gentlemen who, before 1802, ventured to write for Reviews.

With the establishment of the *Edinburgh Review* all this was changed. The prime principle of the new *Review* was independence of booksellers. The plan was not a bookseller's scheme, but was the outcome of the ambitious fervour of half a dozen young adventurers in law, literature, and politics. From the start the bookseller was a "mere instrument," as Brougham specially notes. The management of the *Review* was at first in the hands of Sydney Smith. When he set out for London his last words to the publisher, Constable,

were, "If you will give £200 per annum to your editor and ten guineas a sheet, you will soon have the best Review in Europe." Accordingly, the editorship was at once offered to Jeffrey, at even a higher salary, £300, than Sydney Smith had named. Jeffrey hesitated because of "the risk of general degradation." But he found the £300 "a monstrous bribe"; moreover, the other contributors were all planning to take their ten guineas a sheet; accordingly, after many qualms, he swallowed his scruples and became a paid editor. "The publication," he wrote to his brother, in July, 1803, "is in the highest degree respectable as yet, as there are none but gentlemen connected with it. If it ever sink into the ordinary bookseller's journal, I have done with it."

So began Jeffrey's "reign" of twenty-six years; and so ended the despotism of booksellers. Henceforth the editor, not the publisher, was master. It was Jeffrey who decided what books should be handled, or rather what subjects should be discussed; it was Jeffrey who determined the price to be paid for each article, — "I had," he declares, "an unlimited discretion in this respect"; it was Jeffrey who pleaded with the dilatory, mollified the refractory, and reached out here and there after new contributors; in short, it was Jeffrey who shaped the policy of the *Review* and impressed on it its distinctive character.

But there were several other hardly less important

points in which the business policy of the *Edinburgh* was a new departure. The pay for reviewing was greatly increased. The old price had been two guineas a sheet of sixteen printed pages; the *Edinburgh Review*, after the first three numbers, paid ten guineas a sheet, and very soon sixteen guineas. Moreover, this was the minimum rate; over two-thirds of the articles were, according to Jeffrey, "paid much higher, averaging from twenty to twenty-five guineas a sheet on the whole number."

Again, every contributor was forced to take pay; no contributor, however nice his honour, was suffered to refuse. This regulation was of the utmost importance; the rule salved the consciences of many brilliant young professional men, who were glad of pay, but ashamed to write for it, and afraid of being dubbed penny-a-liners. By Jeffrey's clever arrangement they could write for fame or for simple amusement, and then have money "thrust upon them." With high prices and enforced compensation the new *Review* at once drew into its service men of a totally different stamp from the old hack-writers.

Finally, the *Edinburgh* was published quarterly, whereas the old Reviews were published monthly. This change was for two reasons important: in the first place, writers had more time in which to prepare their articles and led less of a hand-to-mouth life intellectually; and, in the second place, the *Review* made no attempt to notice all publications,

and chose for discussion only books of real significance. Coleridge particularly commends this part of the policy of the *Review:* "It has a claim upon the gratitude of the literary republic, and, indeed, of the reading public at large, for having originated the scheme of reviewing those books only, which are susceptible and deserving of argumentative criticism."[1]

VI

These, then, were the principal points in which the organization and policy of the *Edinburgh Review* contrasted with those of its predecessors; and the influence of these changes on the tone and spirit of the articles in the new *Review* can hardly be exaggerated. The *Edinburgh Review* was not a catch-all for waste information; it was an organ of thought, a busy intellectual centre, from which the newest ideas were sent out in a perpetual stream through the minds of sympathetic readers. The *Review* had opinions of its own on all public questions. In politics, it advocated the principles of the Constitutional Whigs, at first in a non-partisan spirit, after 1808, fiercely and aggressively; it pleaded for reform of the representation, for Catholic emancipation, for a wise recognition of the just discontent of the lower classes, and for judicious measures to allay this discontent without violent Constitutional changes. In social matters,

[1] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, chap. 21.

it urged reforms of all kinds, the repeal of the game-laws, the improvement of prisons, the protection of chimney-sweeps and other social unfortunates. In religion, it argued for toleration. In education, it attacked pedantry and tradition, ridiculed the narrowness of university ideals, and contended for the adoption of practical methods and utilitarian aims. In all these departments it criticised the existing order of things, always brilliantly and suggestively, and sometimes fiercely and radically, and stirred the public into a keener consciousness and more intelligent appreciation of the questions of the hour, social, political, and religious.

Now it is plain that, to accomplish all this, writers would find it necessary to go far outside of the old limits of book-reviewing, and to make their articles express their own independent ideas on various important topics, rather than simply their critical opinions of the merits of new publications. And this is precisely what happened. A book-review became in most cases merely a mask for the writer's own ideas on some burning question of the hour. In other words, the establishment of the *Edinburgh Review* really led to the evolution of a new literary form; the old-fashioned review-article was converted into a brief argumentative essay discussing some living topic, political or social, in the light of the very latest ideas. This kind of essay had been unknown in the eighteenth century, and

was developed at the opening of the nineteenth century in response to the needs of the moment.

Nor was this change in the nature of the review-article unremarked at the time; Hazlitt noted it, and with his usual sourness protested against it. "If [the critic] recurs," he says, "to the stipulated subject in the end, it is not till after he has exhausted his budget of general knowledge; and he establishes his own claims first in an elaborate inaugural dissertation *de omni scibili et quibusdam aliis*, before he deigns to bring forward the pretensions of the original candidate for praise, who is only the second figure in the piece. We may sometimes see articles of this sort, in which no allusion whatever is made to the work under sentence of death, after the first announcement of the title-page."[1] Coleridge, on the other hand, approved of the change, and commended the "plan of supplying the vacant place of the trash or mediocrity wisely left to sink into oblivion by their own weight, with original essays on the most interesting subjects of the time, religious or political; in which the titles of the books or pamphlets prefixed furnish only the name and occasion of the disquisition."[2] The reviewers themselves recognized, of course, the change they were working, though they did not altogether realize its significance. In 1807, Horner writes Jeffrey, "Have you any good

[1] Hazlitt's *Table Talk*, 2d series, essay 6.

[2] Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, chap. 21.

subjects in view for your nineteenth? There are two I wish you, *yourself*, would undertake, if you can pick up books that would admit of them."[1] This quotation illustrates the fact that the important question in the minds of the reviewers was always, not "What new books have appeared?" but "What topics just now have the greatest actuality and are best worth discussing?"

This, then, was largely the cause of the success of the *Review:* it offered, in its articles, a literary form by means of which the most active and original minds could at once come into communication with "the intelligent public" on all vital topics; it made the best thought and the newest knowledge more readily available than ever before for readers who were every day becoming more alive to their value.

The times were plainly favourable. The French Revolution had stirred men's imaginations as they had not been stirred for a century, and had shaken portentously in all directions the foundations of belief. Traditions in politics, in social organization, in religion, were violently assailed by men like Godwin, Horne Tooke, and Holcroft, and loyally defended by enthusiastic conservatives. The fever of Romanticism was already making itself felt and was quickening men's hearts to new passions and firing their imaginations with new visions of possible bliss. The air was full of

[1] *Memoirs and Correspondence of Horner*, I, 419.

questions and doubts, of eager forecasts, and of ominous warnings. All this ferment of life and feeling demanded freer utterance than could be found through old literary forms and with old methods of publication.

Moreover, the increasing importance of the middle class and the spread of popular education were favourable to the development of the new literary form. The number of men who read and thought for themselves had been rapidly growing. These men were not scholars or deep thinkers, and had no leisure to puzzle out learned treatises. They were overworked professional men or business men, who were alive to the questions of the hour, who had thought over them and discussed them wherever and whenever they could, and who were anxious for guidance from "men of light and leading." The essays of the new *Review* gave them just what they wanted, — brief, clear, yet original and suggestive, dissertations by the best-trained minds on the most important current topics.

These, then, are some of the causes, over and beyond Jeffrey's editorial skill, and the brilliancy and originality of his co-workers, that led to the unprecedented success of the *Edinburgh Review*. Their importance and their significance are shown by the fact that within a few years several other Reviews were founded on precisely the same plan with the *Edinburgh*, and soon rivalled it in popular favour. In 1809 the Tory *Quarterly Review* was

started with William Gifford as editor, and Scott, Southey, Canning, Ellis, and Croker among its contributors. In 1820 the *Retrospective Review* was established, and in 1824 the *Westminster Review*, the organ of the Radicals; Bentham was its patron, Bowring its editor, and James Mill and John Stuart Mill were constant contributors. These Reviews were all quarterlies, and in the details of their organization were modelled after the famous *Edinburgh*. They all found a ready welcome, and, with the exception of the *Retrospective*, have continued to thrive down to our own day.

VII

The bearing of all this upon the history of Jeffrey's literary reputation must be fairly obvious. Jeffrey profited from the conspiracy of a great many fortunate circumstances, and for a series of years enjoyed, as dictator of the policy of the *Edinburgh Review*, a reputation as critic that was really far beyond what his intrinsic merit justified. Leigh Hunt and Lamb were much more delicate and imaginative appreciators of literature than Jeffrey; Hazlitt, despite his waywardness and arrogance, was a subtler and more stimulating literary interpreter. Coleridge was incomparably Jeffrey's superior in penetrating insight, in learning and scholarship, in philosophic scope, and in refinement and sureness of taste. Yet Jeffrey,

by dint of his cleverness, versatility, brilliancy, readiness of resource, and, above all, because of his commanding position as the director of the new Whig *Review*, outstripped all these competitors and imposed himself on public opinion as the typically infallible critic of his day and generation. His personal charm, too, worked in his favour; his Whig following was enthusiastically loyal. Everything tended to increase, for the time being, his fame as a literary autocrat.

The later reaction, which has so nearly consigned Jeffrey to the region of unread authors, was in its turn extreme, and yet followed naturally. Wordsworth and Coleridge, whom Jeffrey had assailed persistently till he had become in the public mind the representative foe of Romanticism, had won their cause, and been received by wider and wider circles of the most cultivated and discerning readers as among the foremost poets of their age. Jeffrey, their arch-enemy, suffered correspondingly in public esteem. Time seemed to have proved him wrong in one of his most strenuously asserted prejudices. Moreover, this particular defeat was merely one special instance of the evil effect that far-reaching influences were having upon Jeffrey's reputation. His modes of conceiving life were being outgrown. His genial, man-of-the-world wisdom and somewhat narrow range of feeling seemed more and more unsatisfactory, as the public gradually made their own the deeper spiritual

experience of idealistic poets, like Shelley, and of transcendental prose-writers, like Carlyle. Jeffrey's dry intellectuality and his shallow associational psychology seemed unequal to the vital problems in art and in ethics that the new age was canvassing. Moreover, his autocratic style and omniscient air had been caught up by all the quarterly Reviews, and no longer served to distinguish him; the methods and the tone of the *Edinburgh* were copied far and wide, and the critics of the new generation were quite a match for Jeffrey in gay, domineering assurance and in easy, swift omniscience. Jeffrey had trained many followers into his own likeness; or, at any rate, the methods and the tone that he had hit upon "survived" and had been universally received as fit.

Finally, Jeffrey's essays, even at their best, had many of the qualities of "occasional" writing, and too often seemed merely meant for the moment; the trail of the periodical was over them all. Their very rapidity, sparkle, and plausibility gave them an air of perishableness; they seemed clever and entertaining improvisations. Work of this sort could hardly hope to maintain itself permanently in public favour. Nor was the collection of his essays, that Jeffrey saw fit to publish in 1843, of a sort to make a stand against the general indifference that was clouding his fame. Two thousand pages of improvised comments on all manner of topics, from the *Memoirs of Baber* to Dugald

Stewart's *Philosophical Essays*, could scarcely be expected to secure a fixed place for themselves in the affections of large masses of readers. A far smaller volume, that should have included only the essays, or portions of essays, that were best wrought in style, most vigorously thought out, and contained the most characteristic and final of Jeffrey's opinions, would have been more likely — except in so far as Jeffrey based his claims on his versatility — to have insured him permanent remembrance as critic and prose-writer.

The reaction, then, against Jeffrey was necessary and, in some degree, just. Yet, now that the air is cleared of Romantic prejudices, Jeffrey's real services to the causes both of criticism and of sound literature may be more accurately perceived and defined. Not for a moment can the student who aims at genuine insight into the history of literature and of literary opinion during the first quarter of our century afford to disregard Jeffrey and his *Edinburgh Review* Essays, or to pass him by with a phrase as a mere unsuccessful opponent of Wordsworth and Coleridge. Jeffrey influenced public opinion decisively and beneficially on a vast range of subjects. He broadened the methods of literary criticism and won for it new points of view and new fields. He put the relations between critic and public on a sounder basis, and raised the profession of literary criticism into an honourable calling. Finally, he developed English

style, added to its swiftness of play and brilliant serviceableness, and prepared the way for the dazzlingly effective, if somewhat mechanical, technique of Macaulay. All these good works are nowadays too often forgotten; and on the injustice of such neglect one cannot comment more aptly than through the quotation of Jeffrey's own famous phrase — "This will never do."

NEWMAN AS A PROSE-WRITER

I

In these "uncanonical times," it may seem somewhat grotesque to go for information about an author's style to his patron saint. Yet no surer way exists for gaining an insight into the peculiar charm of Cardinal Newman's writings than through an appeal to St. Philip Neri, the founder of the Congregation of the Oratory, whom Newman chose for his "own special Father and Patron." In at least two of his discourses, or essays, Newman has analyzed the character and peculiar influence of St. Philip Neri. "Whatever was exact and systematic," Newman tells us, "pleased him not; he put from him monastic rule and authoritative speech, as David refused the armour of his king. No; he would be but an ordinary individual priest as others; and his weapons should be but unaffected humility and unpretending love. All he did was to be done by the light, and fervour, and convincing eloquence of his personal character and his easy conversation." In another essay, Newman describes St. Philip's distrust of "the severity of the Regular" as a means

for the control of those whom he sought to subjugate. "Influence," adroit intimacy, winning intercourse, these were the means by which St. Philip preferred to work on those about him.

Newman's loving regard for these traits of St. Philip's genius is a revelation of some of the deepest instincts of his nature, — instincts which must at once be brought into view in any attempt to appreciate his style as a writer of prose. A peculiar personal charm is impressed on all the most characteristic of Newman's prose-writings, — on whatever he wrote after he had, as an artist, found himself and realized his essential genius. Abstract as his subject may be, he gives it some colour of life and some of the beauty and grace of friendly discourse. Every one knows what charm there is in the talk of a man of the world who puts before his listeners, in picturesque phrases, the variable incidents of actual life as he himself has encountered them. The whim, the personal idiom, the glancing humour, the concrete image, the vivacious disorderliness, the skilful dealing at first hand with glowing human experience, give to talk of this sort a peculiarly winning quality. And the style that in literature mimics afar the colloquial rhythms and the idiom of such familiar talk has, also, its peculiar charm. The writer seems to escape from the blank region of authorship, to realize himself before the reader as a friendly face and form, and to communicate himself through the

hundred and one subtle signs of eye and voice and gesture and smile that give to actual human intercourse its delight and stimulating power. The extreme form of this colloquial style, where an author is merely amiably garrulous, is not to be found in Newman's writings; Newman's temper was, after all, too academic for this, and his subjects were too abstract and difficult. Rarely, however, have topics as speculative as are many of Newman's been treated with so much of the wayward charm and pliant grace of friendly discourse as Newman reaches. His style, at its best, has the urbanity, the affability, the winning adroitness, even the half-careless desultoriness of the familiar talk of a man of the world with his fellows.

Yet it is not this colloquial grace by itself that gives to Newman's discussions of abstract topics their peculiar distinction; it is rather his reconciliation of the charm of colloquial freedom with the demands of logical method and thoroughness of treatment. Garrulity to no purpose is usually easy enough. But the peculiarity of Newman's style and method is that, with all their apparent casualness, they lead the reader to a complete and essentially logical command of the topic under discussion. When he chose, Newman was absolute master of the severe beauty of rational discourse, — of the beauty of that kind of discourse that disdains to follow any associations save those of logic, — discusses with fine economic precision just the

aspects of truth that right reason detects as essential to the question in hand, and is everywhere formally correct, systematic, and dignified. His earliest work is often austerely wrought in accordance with this ideal. Ultimately, however, the essential charm that made him so winning in personal intercourse passed over into his prose, and conveyed into it the warmth, and elasticity, and colour of life. Yet this change involved no real sacrifice of structure or loss of firmness in the texture of his thought. And for the trained student of literary method much of the surpassing charm of Newman's work is due to the possibility of finding in it, on analysis, a continual victorious union of logical strenuousness with the grace and ease and charm of a colloquial manner and idiom. This victory is so easily won as to seem something by the way; but the student and analyst knows that it is the result of rare tact, finely disciplined instinct, exquisite rhetorical insight and foresight, and extraordinary luminousness and largeness of thought.

The very perfection of Newman's rhetorical manner has exposed him to some unpleasant charges of insincerity. It is not strange that in the midst of a people like the English, who are perhaps somewhat affectedly straightforward and pretentiously downright, Newman should, now and then, have suffered for his adroitness and grace. The bluff, impetuous man is proverbially ready to interpret

subtlety as duplicity, and to rebuke reticence and indirectness as deceit and hypocrisy. Prejudice of this sort was probably the real cause of Canon Kingsley's famous attack upon Newman. He had an instinctive dislike of Newman's sinuousness and suppleness, and, without pausing to analyze very carefully, he spoke out fiercely against Newman's whole work as containing a special variety of ecclesiastical hypocrisy. The charge was the more plausible inasmuch as there is unquestionably a certain debased ecclesiastical manner whose cheaply insinuating suavity might, by hasty observers, be confused with Newman's bearing and style. Yet the injustice of this confusion and the unfairness of Kingsley's charges become plain after a moment's analysis.

In spite of Newman's ease and affability, a fair-minded reader feels, throughout his writings, when he stops to consider, an underlying suggestion of uncompromising strength and unwavering conviction. He is sure that the author is really revealing himself frankly and unreservedly, notwithstanding his apparent self-effacement, and that he is imposing his own conclusions, persuasively and constrainingly. Moreover, the reader is sure that, however adroitly Newman may be developing his thesis, with an eye to the skilful manipulation of his readers' prejudices, he would at any moment give a point-blank answer to a point-blank question. There is never any real doubt of Newman's

courage and manly English temper, or of his readiness to meet an opponent fairly on the grounds of debate. In the last analysis, it is this fundamental sincerity of tone and this all-pervasive, but unobtrusive self-assertion that preserve Newman's style from the undue flexibility and the insincerity of the debased ecclesiastical style, just as his unfailing good taste preserves him from its cheap suavity or unctuousness.

But Newman's adroitness and rhetorical skill have exposed him to charges of still another kind, charges that concern the very substance of his thought and intellectual life, and charges that have been urged with much greater dialectical skill than Canon Kingsley could attain to. In a general examination of Newman's theories, Mr. E. A. Abbott[1] has accused him of systematically doctoring truth, and of having elaborated, though perhaps unconsciously, various ingenious methods for inveigling unsuspecting readers into the acceptance of doubtful propositions, methods for which Mr. Abbott has devised satirical names, the Art of Lubrication, the Art of Oscillation, the Art of Assimilation. He does not assert that Newman consciously palters with truth, or tries to make the worse appear the better reason. But he urges that Newman was constitutionally fonder of other things than of truth, that he desired, with an overmastering strength, to establish certain conclusions,

[1] *Philomythus*, by E. A. Abbott, London, 1891.

and that he persuaded himself of their correctness by a series of manœuvres which really involved insincere logic.

Here, again, the charges that are made against Newman seem the result of prejudice and temperamental hostility on the part of his critic. Mr. Abbott is a bit of a formalist, a Caledonian intellect, a thorough-going positivist, a thinker for whom the only truth that exists is truth that can be scientifically verified. He is quite unable to comprehend, or, at any rate, to tolerate, Newman's mental constitution and his resulting methods of conceiving of life and relating himself to its facts. Truth is to Newman a much subtler matter, a much more elusive susbtance, than it is to the positivist, to the mere intellectual dealer in facts and in figures; it cannot be packed into syllogisms as pills are packed into a box; it cannot be conveyed into the human system with the simple directness which the Laputa wiseacre aimed at who was for teaching his pupils geometry by feeding them on paper duly inscribed with geometrical figures. Moreover, language is an infinitely treacherous medium; words are so "false," so capable of endless change, that one is "loath to prove reason with them." Readers, too, are widely diverse, and are open to countless other appeals than that of sheer logic. Because of such considerations as these, Newman is continually studious of effect in his writings; he is intensely conscious of his audience; and he is always

striving to win a way for his convictions, and aiming to insinuate them into the minds and hearts of his hearers by gently persuasive means.

But all this by no means implies any real carelessness of truth on Newman's part, or any sacrifice of truth to expediency. Truth is difficult of attainment, and hard to transmit; all the more strenuously does Newman set himself to trace it out in its obscurity and remoteness, and to reveal it in all its intricacies. Moreover, subtle and elusive as it may be, it is nevertheless something tangible and describable and defensible; something, furthermore, of the acquisition of which Newman can give a very definite account; something as far as possible from mere misty sentiment, and something, furthermore, to be strenuously asserted and defended.

Sympathetic and patient readers of Newman, then, can hardly doubt his essential mental integrity or his courage and readiness to be frank, even in those passages or in those works where the search for the subtlest shades of truth, or the desire to avoid clashing needlessly on prejudice, or the wish to win a favourable hearing, takes the author most indirectly and tortuously towards his end. It is his underlying manliness of mind and frank readiness to give an account of himself that prevent Newman's prevailing subtlety, adroitness, and suavity from leaving on the mind of an unprejudiced reader any impression of timorousness or disingenuousness.

II

In what has been said of Newman's realization of the elusive nature of truth and of the great difficulty of securing a welcome for it in the minds and hearts of the mass of men lies the key to what is most distinctive in his methods. He was a great rhetorician, and whatever he produced shows evidence, on analysis, of having been constructed with the utmost niceness of instinct and deftness of hand. He himself frankly admitted his rhetorical bent. Writing to Hurrell Froude in 1836, about the management of the Tractarian agitation, he says, "You and Keble are the philosophers, and I the rhetorician."[1] And in a somewhat earlier letter he speaks of his aptitude for rhetoric in even stronger terms: "I have a vivid perception of the consequences of certain admitted principles, have a considerable intellectual capacity of drawing them out, have the refinement to admire them, and a rhetorical or histrionic power to represent them."[2]

This rhetorical skill was partly natural and instinctive, and partly the result of training. From his earliest years as a student, Newman had been conspicuous for the subtlety and flexibility of his intelligence, for his readiness in assuming for speculative purposes the most diverse points of

[1] *Letters and Correspondence of J. H. Newman*, 1891, II, 156.
[2] *Ibid.*, I, 416.

view, and for his insight into temperaments and his comprehension of their modifying action on the white light of truth. With this admirable equipment for effective rhetorical work, he came directly under the influence, in Oriel College, of two exceptionally great rhetoricians, Dr. Copleston, for many years Provost of Oriel, and Whately, one of its most influential Fellows. Copleston was a famous controversialist and dialectician, who had long been regarded as the chief champion of the University against the attacks of outsiders. His *Advice to a Young Reviewer with a Specimen of the Art* (1807), had turned into ridicule the airs and pretensions of the young Edinburgh reviewers and had led them into severe strictures on University methods, against which attacks, however, Dr. Copleston had vigorously defended Oxford in various publications, to the satisfaction of all University men. He was the Provost of Oriel during the first year of Newman's residence there, and suggestions of the influence of his ideas and methods are to be found throughout the early pages of the *Apologia* and the *Autobiographical Memoir*. Still more decisive, however, was the influence of a yet more famous rhetorician, Dr. Whately, whose lectures on logic and on rhetoric remained almost down to the present day standard text-books in those subjects. Whately was also renowned as a controversialist, and his *Historic Doubts relative to Napoleon Buonaparte* was perhaps the cleverest and

most famous piece of ironical argumentation produced in England during the first quarter of the century. Newman, for several of his most impressionable years, was intimately associated with Whately. "He emphatically opened my mind," Newman says in the *Apologia*, "and taught me to think and to use my reason." Under the influence of these two masters of rhetoric and redoubtable controversialists Newman's natural aptitude for rhetorical methods was encouraged and fostered, so that he became a perfect adept in all the arts of exposition and argumentation and persuasion.

Whatever work of Newman's, then, we take up, we may be sure that its construction will repay careful analysis. In trying to present any set of truths, Newman was consciously confronting a delicate psychological problem; he was aware of the elements that entered into the problem; he knew what special difficulties he had to face because of the special nature of the truth he was dealing with, — its abstractness, or complexity, or novelty. He had measured, also, the precise degree of resistance he must expect because of the peculiar prejudices or preoccupations of his readers. And the shape which his discussion finally took — the particular methods that he followed — were the result of a deliberate adaptation of means to ends; they were the methods that his trained rhetorical instinct and his insight into the truth he was handling and into the temperaments and intelli-

gences he was to address himself to dictated as most likely to persuade.

Although ordinarily Newman does not explain the method he follows or comment on the difficulties of his problem, he has, in his *Apologia*, departed from this rule, and taken his readers into his confidence. In the first thirty pages of this self-justificatory piece of writing, he sets forth minutely the prejudices against which he must make his way, considers various possible modes of overcoming these prejudices, notes the precise reasons that finally lead him to the actual plan he chooses, and is entirely explicit as to the elaborate design that underlies and controls the seeming desultoriness of his whole discussion.

The problem which in this case confronted Newman was briefly as follows. He had been charged by Kingsley with teaching "lying on system." He had protested against the charge and had obtained a half-hearted apology. Later, however, the charge had been reiterated more formally, and with the added taunt that as Newman recommended systematic dissimulation no one could be expected to accept his self-exculpating word. These charges fell in, as Newman recognized, first, with the general trend of British prejudice against Roman Catholics, and, secondly, with the particular prejudice against Newman himself that sprang from his early attempts to make the Anglican Church more Catholic, and his subsequent secession to

Rome. How, then, was Newman to persuade the public of Kingsley's injustice and his own innocence? He saw at once that to deal with each separate charge would be mere waste of time; to prove that in a special case he had not lied or recommended lying would carry him no whit towards his end, as long as contemptuous distrust remained the dominant mood of the British mind towards himself and his party. First of all, he must conquer this mood; he must overthrow the presumption against him, and win for his cause at least such an unbiassed hearing as is accorded to the ordinary man upon trial whose record has been hitherto clean; then he might hope to secure for his particular denials a universal scope. The method that he chose in order to win his readers was admirably conceived. He would put himself vitally and almost dramatically before them; he would bring them within the actual sound of his voice and the glance of his eye; he would let them follow him through the long course of his years as student, tutor, preacher, and leader, and come to know him as intimately as those few friends had known him with whom he had lived most freely. Then, he would ask his readers, when he had put his personality before them in its many shifting, but continuous aspects, and with all the intense persuasiveness of a dramatic portrayal, whether they were ready to believe of the man they had thus watched through the round of his duties that

he was a liar. Of the peculiar power which Newman could count on exerting in thus appealing to his personal charm he was, of course, unable to speak in his Preface. In truth, however, he was having recourse to an influence which had always been potent whenever it had had a chance to make itself felt. Throughout his life at Oxford it was true of his relations to others that "friends unasked, unhoped" had "come," — all men who met him falling almost inevitably under the sway of his winning and commanding personality. Newman was, therefore, well advised when he resolved to reveal himself to the world and to trust to the conciliating effect of this self-revelation to prepare for his specific denial of Kingsley's charges.

In accordance with this purpose and plan, the *Apologia pro Vita Sua,* or History of his Religious Opinions, was written; and for these reasons his answer to certain definite charges of equivocation and systematic and elaborate misrepresentation was so shaped as to include in its scope the story of his whole life. Of the 384 pages of the original edition of the *Apologia,* only the last 93 pages are devoted to the actual refutation of Kingsley's charges; the 238 pages that precede are merely persuasive, and simply prepare the way for the final defence. Probably in no other piece of writing is the actual demonstration so curiously small in proportion to the means that are taken to make the logic effective. Of course, it

may be urged in reply to this view of the construction of the *Apologia*, that to look at the book as purely a reply to Kingsley, is to judge it from an arbitrary and artificial point of view, and hence to distort it inevitably and throw its parts out of proportion; that the real aim of the book was simply and sincerely autobiographic, and that, regarding the book as frank autobiography, the critic need find nothing strange in the proportioning of its parts. In answer to this objection, it should be noted that the last pages of the book deal directly and argumentatively with "Mr. Kingsley's accusations"; that the transition in Part VII. from the history of Newman's opinions to the discussion of the theory of truth-telling is almost imperceptible; and, finally, that Newman himself has declared in the early pages of the book that the sole reason for his self-revelations is his wish to clear away misconceptions, to win once again the confidence of that English public that had long been distrustful of him, and to make widely effective his refutation of Kingsley's charges. The book, then, is fairly to be described as an enormously elaborate and ingenious piece of special pleading to prepare the way for a few syllogisms that have now become grotesquely insignificant.

It has been worth while to lay great stress on this disproportion between persuasion and demonstration in the *Apologia*, because this disproportion illustrates, with almost the over-emphasis of carica-

ture, certain of Newman's fundamental beliefs and resulting tricks of method. First and foremost, it illustrates the slight esteem in which he held the formal logic of the schools and syllogistic demonstrations. Not that he failed to recognize the value of analysis and logical demonstration as verifying processes; but he unhesitatingly subordinated these processes to those by which truth is originally won, and to those also by which truth is persuasively inculcated.

In a sermon on *Implicit and Explicit Reason*, he distinguishes with great elaborateness between the method by which the mind makes its way almost intuitively to the possession of a new truth, or set of truths, and the subsequent analysis by which it takes account of this half-instinctive original process and renders the moments of the process self-conscious and articulate. His description of the intellect delicately and swiftly feeling its way towards truth may well be quoted entire: "The mind ranges to and fro, and spreads out and advances forward with a quickness which has become a proverb, and a subtlety and versatility which baffle investigation. It passes on from point to point, gaining one by some indication; another on a probability; then availing itself of an association; then falling back on some received law; next seizing on testimony; then committing itself to some popular impression, or some inward instinct, or some obscure memory; and thus it makes prog-

ress not unlike a clamberer on a steep cliff, who, by quick eye, prompt hand, and firm foot, ascends, how, he knows not himself, by personal endowments and by practice, rather than by rule, leaving no track behind him, and unable to teach another. It is not too much to say that the stepping by which great geniuses scale the mountain of truth is as unsafe and precarious to men in general as the ascent of a skilful mountaineer up a literal crag. It is a way which they alone can take; and its justification lies alone in their success. And such mainly is the way in which all men, gifted or not gifted, commonly reason — not by rule, but by an inward faculty. Reasoning, then, or the exercise of reason, is a living, spontaneous energy within us, not an art."[1]

But not only is syllogistic reasoning not the original process by which truth is attained; it is in no way essential to the validity or completeness of the process. "Clearness in argument certainly is not indispensable to reasoning well. Accuracy in stating doctrines or principles is not essential to feeling and acting upon them. The exercise of analysis is not necessary to the integrity of the process analyzed. The process of reasoning is complete in itself, and independent."[2]

Finally, logical demonstration has relatively little value as a means of winning a hearing for

[1] *Oxford University Sermons*, ed. 1887, p. 257.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 259.

new truth, of securing its entrance into the popular consciousness, and of giving it a place among the determining powers of life. "Logic makes but a sorry rhetoric with the multitude; first shoot round corners, and you may not despair of converting by a syllogism." Men must be inveigled into the acceptance of truth; they cannot be driven to accept it at the point of the syllogism. "The heart is commonly reached, not through the reason, but through the imagination, by means of direct impressions, by the testimony of facts and events, by history, by description. People influence us, voices melt us, looks subdue us, deeds inflame us."

The application of all this, — particularly of what Newman says touching the persuasiveness of a personal appeal, — to the whole method of the *Apologia* hardly needs pointing out. The work is, from first to last, intensely personal in its tone and matter, persuasive because of its concreteness, its dramatic vividness, the modulations of the speaker's voice, the sincerity and dignity of his look and bearing. Logic, of course, gives coherence to the discussions. The processes of thought by which Newman moved from point to point in his theological development are consistently set forth; but the convincing quality of the book comes from its embodiment of a life, not from its systematization of a theory.

In accordance with this general character of the book is its tone throughout; its style is the perfec-

tion of informality and easy colloquialism. Now and then, in describing his ideas on specially complicated questions, Newman makes use of numbered propositions, and proceeds, for the time being, with the precaution and precision of the dialectician. But, for the most part, he is as unconstrained and apparently fortuitous in his presentation of ideas as if he were merely emulating Montaigne in confidential self-revelation, and were guided by no controversial purpose. Perhaps no writer has surpassed, or even equalled, Newman in combining apparent desultoriness of treatment with real definiteness of purpose and clairvoyance of method.

III

Another admirable example of Newman's least formal, and most characteristic, method may be found in his series of papers on the *Rise and Progress of Universities*. Here, again, there is apparent desultoriness, or, at most, a careless following of historical sequence. One after another, with what seems like a haphazard choice, Newman describes a half-dozen of the most famous universities of the past, explains popularly their organization, methods, and aims, entertaining the reader meanwhile with such superlative pieces of rhetoric as the description of Attica and Athens, and with such dramatic episodes as that of Abelard. Yet underneath this apparent caprice runs the control-

ling purpose of putting the reader in possession, through concrete illustrations, of the complete idea of a typically effective university. Each special school that Newman describes illustrates some essential attribute of the ideal school; and incidentally the reader, who is all the time beguiled, from chapter to chapter, by Newman's picturesque detail, takes into his mind the various features, and ultimately the complete image, of the perfect type.

In the series of *Discourses on the Idea of a University,* Newman's method is more formal and his tone more controversial. Newman was this time addressing a distinctly scholarly audience, and was treating of a series of abstract topics, on which he was called to pronounce in his character of probable vice-chancellor of the proposed university. Accordingly, throughout these *Discourses* he is consistently academic in tone and manner, and formal and elaborate in method. He lays out his work with somewhat mechanical precision; he sketches his plan strictly beforehand; he defines terms and refines upon possible meanings, and guards at each step against misinterpretations; he pauses often to come to an understanding with his hearers about the progress already made, and to consider what line of advance severe logical method next dictates. In all these ways, he is deliberate, explicit, and demonstrative. Yet despite this strenuous regard for system and method, not even here does Newman become crabbedly scholastic or

pedantically over-formal; the result of his strenuousness is, rather, a finely conscientious circumspection of demeanour and an academic dignity of bearing. There is something irresistibly impressive in the perfect poise with which he moves through the intricacies of the many abstractions that his subject involves. He exhibits each aspect of his subject in just the right perspective and with just the requisite minuteness of detail; he leads us unerringly from each point of view to that which most naturally follows; he keeps us always aware of the relation of each aspect to the total sum of truth he is trying to help us to grasp; and so, little by little, he secures for us that perfect command of an intellectual region, in its concrete facts and in its abstract relations, which exposition aims to make possible. These *Discourses* are as fine an example as exists in English of the union of strict method with charm of style in the treatment of an abstract topic.

In the *Development of Christian Doctrine* and the *Grammar of Assent* the severity of Newman's method is somewhat greater, as is but natural in strictly scientific treatises. Yet even in these abstract discussions his style retains an inalienable charm, due to the luminousness of the atmosphere, the wide-ranging command of illustrations, the unobtrusively tropical phrasing, and the steady harmonious sweep of the periods. Few books on equally abstract topics are as easy reading.

Newman's methods as a controversialist may advantageously be studied in his *Present Position of Catholics in England*, — a work that contains some of his most ingenious and caustic irony. In plan and construction, these discourses illustrate once more Newman's consummate skill in adapting his method to the matter in hand. His purpose in this case is to right the Roman Catholic Church with the English nation, to exhibit the Roman Catholics as he knows them to be, a conscientious, honourable, patriotic body of men, and to put an end once for all, if possible, to the long tradition of calumny that has persecuted them. Such is his problem. He sets about its solution characteristically. He does not undertake to demonstrate the truth of Roman Catholic doctrines, or, by direct evidence and argument, to refute the wild charges of hypocrisy and corruption which Protestants are habitually making against Roman Catholics. His methods are much subtler than these and also much more comprehensive and final. He sets himself to analyze Protestant prejudice, and to destroy it by resolving it into its elements. He takes it up historically, and exhibits its origin in an atmosphere of intense partisan conflict, and its development in the midst of peculiarly favourable intellectual and moral conditions; he shows that it is political in its origin and has been inwrought into the very fibre of English national life: "English Protestantism is the

religion of the throne; it is represented, realized, taught, transmitted in the succession of monarchs and an hereditary aristocracy. It is religion grafted upon loyalty; and its strength is not in argument, not in fact, not in the unanswerable controversialist, not in an apostolic succession, not in sanction of Scripture — but in a royal road to faith, in backing up a King whom men see, against a Pope whom they do not see. The devolution of its crown is the tradition of its creed; and to doubt its truth is to be disloyal towards its Sovereign. Kings are an Englishman's saints and doctors; he likes somebody or something at which he can cry, 'huzzah,' and throw up his hat."

To hate a "Romanist," then, is as natural for John Bull as to hate a Frenchman, and to libel him is a matter of patriotism. The Englishman's romantic imagination has for generations been spinning myths of Catholic misdoing to satisfy these deep instinctive animosities. Moreover, many other typical English qualities, in addition to loyalty and patriotism, have contributed to foster and develop this Protestant prejudice. Such are the controlling practical interests of the middle-class English, their content with compromise-working schemes, and their contempt for abstractions and subtleties; their shuddering dislike of innovation; their well-meaning obstinacy in ignorance, and their heroic adherence to familiar, though undeniable error; their insularity; their hatred of foreigners

in general, and their frenzied fear of the Pope in particular. With unfailing adroitness of suggestion, Newman makes clear how these national traits, and many others closely related to them, have coöperated to originate and develop Protestant hatred of Roman Catholicism. His mastery of the details of social life and of motives of action is in this discussion of English history and contemporary life specially conspicuous. Every phase of peculiarly English thought and feeling is present to him; every intricacy of the curiously subterranean British national temperament is traced out. And the result is that prejudice is explained out of existence. The intense hostility that seems so primitive an instinct as to justify itself like the belief in God or in an outer world, is resolved into the expression of a vast mass of petty, and often discreditable instincts, and so loses all its validity in losing its apparent primitiveness and mystery.

Such is the general plan and scope of Newman's attack on Protestant prejudice; in carrying out the plan and making his attack brilliantly effective, he shows inexhaustible ingenuity and unwearied invention. He uses fables, allegories, and elaborate pieces of irony; he develops an unending series of picturesque illustrations of Protestant prejudice, drawn from all sources, past and present; he sets curious traps for this prejudice, catches it at unawares, and shows it up to his readers in guises they can hardly defend; he plays skilfully upon

the instincts that lie at its root, and by clever manipulation makes them declare themselves in a twinkling in favour of some aspect of Roman Catholicism. In short, he uses all the rhetorical devices of which he is master to win a hearing from the half-hostile, to beguile the unwilling, to amuse the captious, and, finally, to insinuate into the minds of his readers an all-permeating mood of contempt for Protestant narrowness and bigotry, and of open-minded appreciation of the merits of Roman Catholics.

IV

For still another reason the lectures on the *Present Position of Catholics* are specially interesting to a student of Newman's methods; they illustrate exceptionally well his skill in the use of irony. To the genuine rhetorician there is something specially attractive in the duplicity of irony, because of the opportunity it offers of playing with points of view, of juggling with phrases, of showing virtuosity in the manipulation of both thoughts and words. Newman was too much of a rhetorician not to feel this fascination. Moreover, he had learned from his study of Copleston and Whately the possibilities of irony as a controversial weapon. Copleston's *Advice to a Young Reviewer*, and Whately's *Historic Doubts relative to Napoleon Buonaparte* were typical specimens of academic irony, where, with impressive dignity

and suavity and the most plausible simplicity and candour, the writers, while seemingly advocating a certain policy, or theory, or set of conclusions, were really sneering throughout at a somewhat similar policy or theory — that of their opponents — and laying it open to helpless ridicule.

One of the most noteworthy characteristics of Newman's irony — and in this point his irony resembled that of his masters — was its positive argumentative value. Often an elaborate piece of irony is chiefly destructive; it turns cleverly into ridicule the general attitude of mind of the writer's opponents, but makes no attempt to supply a substitute for the faith it destroys. Swift's irony is usually of this character. It is intensely ill-natured, even savage, and is so extravagant that it sometimes defeats its own end as argument. Its hauteur and bitterness produce a reaction in the mind of the reader, and force him to distrust the judgment and sanity of a man who can be so inveterately and fiercely insolent. Its indictment is so sweeping and its mood so cynical, that the reader, though he is bullied out of any regard for the ideas that Swift attacks, is repelled from Swift himself, and made to hate his notions as much as he despises those of Swift's opponents. Moreover, full of duplicity and innuendo as it is, its innuendoes are often merely disguised sneers, and not suggestions of genuinely valid reasons why the opinions or prejudices which the writer is assailing

should be abandoned. In the *Modest Proposal* and the *Argument against Abolishing Christianity*, for example, the irony reduces to one long sneer at the prejudice, the selfishness, and the cruelty of Yahoo human nature; there is very little positive argument in behalf of the oppressed Irish on the one hand, or in favour of Christianity on the other.

Newman's irony, on the contrary, is subtle, intellectual, and suggestive. It is positive in its insinuation of actual reasons for abandoning prejudice against Roman Catholics; it is tirelessly adroit, and adjusts itself delicately to every part of the opposing argument; it is suggestive of new ideas, and not only makes the reader see the absurdity of some time-worn prejudice, but hints at its explanation and is ready with a new opinion to take its place. In tone, too, it is very different from Swift's irony; it is not enraged and blindly savage, but more like the best French irony — self-possessed, suave, and oblique. Newman addresses himself with unfailing skill to the prejudices of those whom he is trying to move, and carries his readers with him in a way that Swift was too contemptuous to aim at. Newman's irony wins the wavering, while it routs the hostile. This is the double task it proposes to itself.

An example of his irony at its best may be found in the amusing piece of declamation against the British Constitution and John Bullism which Newman puts into the mouth of a Russian count. The

passage occurs in a lecture on the *Present Position of Catholics*, which was delivered just before the war with Russia, when English jealousy of Russia and contempt for Russian prejudice and ignorance were most intense. It was, of course, on these feelings of jealousy and contempt that Newman skilfully played when he represented the Russian count as grotesquely misinterpreting the British Constitution and *Blackstone's Commentaries*, and as charging them with irreligion and blasphemy. His satirical portrayal of the Russian and the clever manipulation by which he forces the count to exhibit his stores of ungentle dulness and his stock of malignant prejudice delighted every ordinary British reader, and threw him into a pleasant glow of self-satisfaction, and of sympathy with the author; now this was the very mood, as Newman was well aware, in which, if ever, the anti-Catholic reader might be led to question with himself whether, after all, he was perfectly informed about Roman Catholicism, or whether he did not, like the Russian count, take most of his knowledge at second-hand and inherit most of his prejudice. Throughout this passage the ingenuity is conspicuous with which Newman makes use of English dislike of Russia and loyalty to Queen and Constitution; the passage everywhere exemplifies the adroitness, the flexibility, the persuasiveness, and the far-reaching calculation of Newman's irony.

Indeed, this elaborateness and self-consciousness,

and deliberateness of aim, are perhaps, at times, limitations on the success of his irony; it is somewhat too cleverly planned and a trifle over-elaborate. In these respects it contrasts disadvantageously with French irony, which, at its best, is so delightfully by the way, so airily unexpected, so accidental, and yet so dextrously fatal. It would be an instructive study in literary method to compare Newman's ironical defence of Roman Catholicism in the passage already referred to with Montesquieu's ironical attack upon the same system in the *Lettres Persanes.*

V

When we turn from Newman's methods to his style in the narrower meaning of the term, we still find careful elaboration and ingenious calculation of effect, although here, again, the conscientious workmanship becomes evident only on reflection, and the general impression is that of easy and instinctive mastery. Nevertheless, Newman wrought out all that he wrote, with much patient recasting and revising. "It is simply the fact," he tells a friend in one of his letters, "that I have been obliged to take great pains with everything I have written, and I often write chapters over and over again, besides innumerable corrections and interlinear additions. . . . I think I have never written for writing's sake; but my one and single desire

and aim has been to do what is so difficult : viz., to express clearly and exactly my meaning; this has been the motive principle of all my corrections and rewritings."[1]

It is perhaps this sincerity of aim and this sacrifice of the decorative impulse in the strenuous search for adequacy of expression that keep out of Newman's writing every trace of artificiality. Sophisticated as is his style, it is never mannered. There is no pretence, no flourish, no exhibition of rhetorical resources for their own sake. The most impressive and the most richly imaginative passages in his prose come in because he is betrayed into them in his conscientious pursuit of all the aspects of the truth he is illustrating. Moreover, they are curiously congruous in tone with the most colloquial parts of his writing. There is no sudden jar perceptible when, in the midst of his ordinary discourse, one chances upon these passages of essential beauty; perfect continuity of texture is characteristic of his work. This perfect continuity of texture illustrates both the all-pervasive fineness and nobleness of Newman's temper, which constantly holds the elements of moral and spiritual beauty in solution, and which imprints a certain distinction upon even the commonplace, and also the flexibility and elasticity of his style, which enables him with such perfect gradation of effect to change imperceptibly from the lofty to

[1] *Letters*, II, 476.

the common. An admirable example of this exquisite gradation of values and continuity of texture may be found in the third chapter of Newman's *Rise and Progress of Universities,* where he describes Athens and the region round about as the ideal site for a university. Alike in the earlier paragraphs that are merely expository, and in the later ones that portray the beauty of Attica, his style is simple and easily colloquial; and when from the splendid imaginative picture that his descriptive sentences call up, he turns again suddenly to exposition, the transition causes no perceptible jar. The same flexibility and smoothness of style is exemplified in a passage in the third of the discourses on *University Teaching,* where he defines his conception of the Science of Theology. In this passage, the change from a scientific explanation of the duties of the theologian to the almost impassioned eloquence of the ascription of goodness and might to the Deity is effected with no shock or sense of discontinuity.

In its freedom from artificiality and in its perfect sincerity, Newman's style contrasts noticeably with the style of a great rhetorician from whom he nevertheless took many hints — De Quincey. Of his careful study of De Quincey's style there can be no question. In the passage on the Deity, to which reference has just been made, there are unmistakable reminiscences of De Quincey in the iteration of emphasis on an important word, in the

frequent use of inversions, in the rise and fall of the periods, and, indeed, in the subtle rhythmic effects throughout. The piece of writing, however, where the likeness to De Quincey and the imitation of his manner and music are most evident is the sermon on the *Fitness of the Glories of Mary*, — that piece of Newman's prose, it should be noted, which is least defensible against the charge of artificiality and undue ornateness. A passage near the close of the sermon best illustrates the points in question: "And therefore she died in private. It became Him, who died for the world, to die in the world's sight; it became the Great Sacrifice to be lifted up on high, as a light that could not be hid. But she, the Lily of Eden, who had always dwelt out of the sight of man, fittingly did she die in the garden's shade, and amid the sweet flowers in which she had lived. Her departure made no noise in the world. The Church went about her common duties, preaching, converting, suffering. There were persecutions, there was fleeing from place to place, there were martyrs, there were triumphs. At length the rumour spread abroad that the Mother of God was no longer upon earth. Pilgrims went to and fro; they sought for her relics, but they found them not; did she die at Ephesus? or did she die at Jerusalem? reports varied; but her tomb could not be pointed out, or if it was found, it was open; and instead of her pure and fragrant body, there was a growth of

lilies from the earth which she had touched. So inquirers went home marvelling, and waiting for further light." [1]

Though the cadences of Newman's prose are rarely as marked as here, a subtle musical beauty runs elusively through it all. Not that there is any of the sing-song of pseudo-poetic prose. The cadences are always wide-ranging and delicately shifting, with none of the halting iteration and feeble sameness of half-metrical work. Moreover, the rhythms, subtly pervasive as they are, and even symbolic of the mood of the passage as they often prove to be, never compel direct recognition, but act merely as a mass of undistinguished under- and over-tones like those which give to a human voice depth and tenderness and suggestiveness.

Newman understood perfectly the symbolic value of rhythm and the possibility of imposing upon a series of simple words, by delicately sensitive adjustment, a power over the feelings and the imagination like that of an incantation. Several of the passages already quoted or referred to illustrate his instinctive adaptation of cadence to meaning and tone; another passage, in which this same adaptation is exemplified, occurs towards the close of the *Apologia*, where Newman describes the apparent moral chaos in human history. For subtlety of modulation, however, and symbolic suggestiveness, perhaps the tender leave-taking with which

[1] *Discourses to Mixed Congregations*, ed. 1892, p. 373.

the *Apologia* concludes is the most beautiful piece of prose that Newman has written: "I have closed this history of myself with St. Philip's name upon St. Philip's feast-day; and having done so, to whom can I more suitably offer it, as a memorial of affection and gratitude, than to St. Philip's sons, my dearest brothers of this House, the Priests of the Birmingham Oratory, Ambrose St. John, Henry Austin Mills, Henry Bittleston, Edward Caswall, William Paine Neville, and Henry Ignatius Dudley Rider, who have been so faithful to me; who have been so sensitive of my needs; who have been so indulgent to my failings; who have carried me through so many trials; who have grudged no sacrifice, if I have asked for it; who have been so cheerful under discouragements of my causing; who have done so many good works, and let me have the credit of them; — with whom I have lived so long, with whom I hope to die.

"And to you especially, dear Ambrose St. John, whom God gave me, when He took every one else away; who are the link between my old life and my new; who have now for twenty-one years been so devoted to me, so patient, so zealous, so tender; who have let me lean so hard upon you; who have watched me so narrowly; who have never thought of yourself, if I was in question.

"And in you I gather up and bear in memory those familiar, affectionate companions and counsellors, who, in Oxford, were given to me, one

after another, to be my daily solace and relief; and all those others, of great name and high example, who were my thorough friends, and showed me true attachment in times long past; and also those many younger men, whether I knew them or not, who have never been disloyal to me by word or deed; and of all these, thus various in their relations to me, those more especially who have since joined the Catholic Church.

"And I earnestly pray for this whole company, with a hope against hope, that all of us, who once were so united, and so happy in our union, may even now be brought at length, by the Power of the Divine Will, into One Fold and under One Shepherd."

VI

The careful gradation of values in Newman's style and the far-reaching sweep of his periods connect themselves closely with another of his noteworthy characteristics — his breadth of handling. He manipulates with perfect ease and precision vast masses of facts, and makes them all contribute with unerring coöperation to the production of a single effect. However minute his detail, — and his liking for concreteness which will be presently illustrated often incites him to great minuteness, — he is careful not to confuse his composition, destroy the perspective, or lose

sight of total effect. The largeness of his manner and the certainty of his handling place him at once among really great constructive artists.

Against this assertion it may be urged that in his fiction it is just this breadth of effect and constructive skill that are most noticeably lacking; that each of his novels, whatever its merits in places, is unsuccessful as a whole, and leaves a blurred impression. This must at once be granted. But, after all, it is in his theoretical, or moral, or historical work that the real Newman is to be found; in such work he is much more himself, much more thoroughly alive and efficient than in his stories, which, though cleverly turned out, were, after all, things by the way, were amateurish in execution, and never completely called forth his strength. Moreover, even in his novels, we find occasionally the integrating power of his imagination remarkably illustrated. The description in *Callista* of the invading and ravaging locusts is admirably sure in its treatment of detail and even and impressive in tone; the episode of Gurta's madness is powerfully conceived, is swift and sure in its action, and is developed with admirable subordination and colouring of detail and regard to climax.

On the whole, however, it must be granted that in his fiction Newman's sense of total effect and his constructive skill are least conspicuous. In his abstract discussions they never fail him. First

and foremost, they show themselves in the plan of each work as a whole. The treatment is invariably symmetrical and exhaustive; part answers to part with the precision and the delicacy of adjustment of a work of art. Each part is conscious of the whole and has a vitally loyal relation to it, so that the needs and purposes of the whole organism seem present as controlling and centralizing instincts in every chapter, paragraph, and sentence.

In his use of elaborate illustrations for the sake of securing concreteness and sensuous beauty, Newman shows this same integrating power of imagination. In the long illustrations, which often take almost the proportions of episodes in the epical progress of his argument or exposition, the reader has no sense of bewilderment or uncertainty of aim; the strength of Newman's mind and purpose subdues his endlessly diverse material, and compels it into artistic coherence and vital unity; all details are coloured in harmony with the dominant tone of the piece, and reënforce a predetermined mood. When a reader commits himself to one of Newman's discussions, he must resign himself to him body and soul, and be prepared to live and move and have his being in the medium of Newman's thought, and, moreover, in the special range of thought, and the special mood, that this particular discussion provokes. Perhaps this omnipresence of Newman in the minutest details of each discussion becomes ultimately to the

careful student of his writing the most convincing proof of the largeness of his mind, of the intensity of his conception, and of the vigour and vitality of his imagination.

It may be urged that the copiousness of Newman at times becomes wearisome; that he is over-liberal of both explanation and illustration; and that his style, though never exuberant in ornament, is sometimes annoyingly luminous, and blinds with excess of light. This is probably the point in which Newman's style is most open to attack. It is a cloyingly explicit, rather than a stimulatingly suggestive, style; it does almost too much for the reader, and is almost inconsiderately generous. Yet these qualities of his style are so intimately connected with its peculiar personal charm that they can hardly be censured. And it may be noted that so strenuous an advocate of the austere style as Walter Pater has instanced Newman's *Idea of a University* as an example of "the perfect handling of a theory."

One characteristic of the purely suggestive style is certainly to be found in Newman's writing, — great beauty and vigour of phrase. This fact is the more noteworthy because a writer who, like Newman, is impressive in the mass, and excels in securing breadth of effect, very often lacks the ability to strike out memorable epigrams. A few quotations, brought together at random, will show what point and terseness Newman could command

when he chose. "Ten thousand difficulties do not make a doubt." "Great things are done by devotion to one idea." "Calculation never made a hero." "All aberrations are founded on, and have their life in, some truth or other." "Great acts take time." "A book after all cannot make a stand against the wild living intellect of man." "To be converted in partnership." "It is not at all easy (humanly speaking) to wind up an Englishman to a dogmatic level." "Paper logic." "One is not at all pleased when poetry, or eloquence, or devotion is considered as if chiefly intended to feed syllogisms." "Here below to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often." In terseness and sententiousness these utterances could hardly be surpassed by the most acrimonious searcher after epigram, though of course they have not the glitter of paradox to which modern coiners of phrases aspire.

Of wit there is very little to be found in Newman's writings; it is not the natural expression of his temperament. Wit is too dryly intellectual, too external and formal, too little vital, to suit Newman's mental habit. To the appeal of humour he was distinctly more open. It is from the humorous incongruities of imaginary situations that his irony secures its most persuasive effects. Moreover, whenever he is not necessarily preoccupied with the tragically serious aspects of life and of history, or forced by his subject-matter, and

audience, into a formally restrained manner and method, he has, in treating any topic, that urbanity and half-playful kindliness that come from a large-minded and almost tolerant recognition of the essential imperfections of life and human nature. The mood of the man of the world, sweetened and ennobled, and enriched by profound knowledge and deep feeling and spiritual seriousness, gives to much of Newman's work its most distinctive note. When he is able to be thoroughly colloquial, this mood and this tone can assert themselves most freely, and the result is a style through which a gracious kindliness, which is never quite humour, and which yet possesses all its elements, diffuses itself pervasively and persuasively. Throughout the *Rise and Progress of Universities* this tone is traceable, and, to take a specific example, it is largely to its influence that the description of Athens, in the third chapter, owes its peculiar charm. What can be more deliciously incongruous than the agent of a London "mercantile firm" and the Acropolis? or more curiously ill-mated than his standards of valuation and the qualities of the Grecian landscape? Yet how little malicious is Newman's use of this incongruity or disproportion, and how unsuspiciously the "agent of a London Company" ministers to the quiet amusement of the reader, and also helps to heighten, by contrast, the effect of beauty and romance and mystery that Newman is aiming at.

Several allusions have already been made to Newman's liking for concreteness, and in an earlier paragraph his distrust of the abstract was described and illustrated at length. These predilections of his have left their unmistakable mark on his style in ways more technical than those that have thus far been noted. His vocabulary is, for a scholar, exceptionally idiomatic and unliterary; the most ordinary and unparsable turns of every-day speech are inwrought into the texture of his style. In the *Apologia* he speaks of himself in one place as having had "a lounging, free-and-easy way of carrying things on," and the phrase both defines and illustrates one characteristic of his style. Idioms that have the crude force of popular speech, the vitality without the vulgarity of slang, abound in his writings. Of his increasingly clear recognition, in 1839, of the weakness of the Anglican position, he says: "The Via Media was an impossible idea; it was what I had called 'standing on one leg.'" In describing his loss of control over his party in 1840 he declares: "I never had a strong wrist, but at the very time when it was most needed, the reins had broken in my hands." Of the ineradicableness of evil in human nature, he exclaims: "You do but play a sort of 'hunt the slipper,' with the fault of our nature, till you go to Christianity." Illustrations of this idiomatic and homely phrasing might be endlessly multiplied. Moreover, to the concreteness of colloquial phras-

ing, Newman adds the concreteness of the specific word. Other things being equal, he prefers the name of the species to that of the genus, and the name of the class to that of the species; he is always urged forward towards the individual and the actual; his mind does not lag in the region of abstractions and formulas, but presses past the general term, or abstraction, or law, to the image or the example, and into the tangible, glowing, sensible world of fact. His imagery, though never obtrusive, is almost lavishly present, and though never purely decorative, is often very beautiful. It is so inevitable, however, springs so organically from the thought and the mood of the moment, that the reader accepts it unmindfully, and is conscious only of grasping, easily and securely, the writer's meaning. He must first look back through the sentences and study the style in detail before he will come to realize its continual, but decisive, divergence from the literal and commonplace, and its essential freshness and distinction.

On occasion, of course, Newman uses elaborate figures; but commonly for purposes of exposition or persuasion. In such cases the reader may well note the thoroughness with which the figure adjusts itself to every turn and phase of the thought, and the surprising omnipresence and suggestiveness of the tropical phrasing. These qualities of Newman's style are illustrated in the following passage from the *Development of Christian Doctrine*: —

"Whatever be the risk of corruption from intercourse with the world around, such a risk must be encountered if a great idea is duly to be understood, and much more if it is to be fully exhibited. It is elicited and expanded by trial, and battles into perfection and supremacy. Nor does it escape the collision of opinion even in its earlier years, nor does it remain truer to itself, and with a better claim to be considered one and the same, though externally protected from vicissitude and change. It is indeed sometimes said that the stream is clearest near the spring. Whatever use may fairly be made of this image, it does not apply to the history of a philosophy or belief, which, on the contrary, is more equable, and purer, and stronger, when its bed has become deep, and broad, and full. It necessarily rises out of an existing state of things, and for a time savours of the soil. Its vital element needs disengaging from what is foreign and temporary, and is employed in efforts after freedom which become more vigorous and hopeful as its years increase. Its beginnings are no measure of its capabilities, nor of its scope. At first no one knows what it is, or what it is worth. It remains perhaps for a time quiescent; it tries, as it were, its limbs, and proves the ground under it, and feels its way. From time to time, it makes essays which fail, and are in consequence abandoned. It seems in suspense which way to go; it wavers, and at length strikes out in

one definite direction. In time it enters upon strange territory; points of controversy alter their bearing; parties rise and fall around it; dangers and hopes appear in new relations; and old principles reappear under new forms. It changes with them in order to remain the same. In a higher world it is otherwise, but here below to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often."[1] The image of the river pervades this passage throughout, and yet is never obtrusive and never determines or even constrains the progress of the thought. The imagery simply seems to insinuate the ideas into the reader's mind with a certain novelty of appeal and half-sensuous persuasiveness. Another passage of much this kind has already been quoted, where Newman describes the adventurous investigator scaling the crags of truth.[2]

Closely akin to this use of figures is Newman's generous use of examples and illustrations. Whatever be the principle he is discussing, he is not content till he has realized it for the reader in tangible, visible form, until he has given it the cogency and intensity of appeal that only sensations or images possess. In all these ways, then, by his idiomatic and colloquial phrasing, by his specific vocabulary, by his delicately adroit use of metaphors, by his carefully elaborated imagery, and by his wealth of examples and illustrations,

[1] *Development of Christian Doctrine*, ed. 1891, pp. 39–40.
[2] See above, p. 79.

Newman keeps resolutely close to the concrete, and imparts everywhere to his style warmth, vividness, colour, convincing actuality.

VII

It remains to suggest briefly Newman's relation to what was most characteristic in the thought and feeling of his times. Without any attempt at a technical analysis of his doctrine or at a special study of his theorizing in religion and philosophy, it will be possible to connect him, by virtue of certain temperamental characteristics, and certain prevailing modes of conceiving life, with what was most distinctive in the literature of the early part of the century. Interpreted most searchingly, his early Anglicanism and his later Catholicism were peculiar expressions of that Romantic spirit which realized itself with such splendour and power in the best and most vital literature of his day and generation.

Perhaps the most general formula for the work of English literature during the first quarter of the present century is the rediscovery and vindication of the concrete. The special task of the eighteenth century had been to order, and to systematize, and to name; its favourite methods had been analysis and generalization. It asked for no new experience; it sought only to master and reduce to formulas, and to find convenient labels for what

experience it already possessed. It was perpetually in search of standards and canons; it was conventional through and through; and its men felt secure from the ills of time only when sheltered under some ingenious artificial construction of rule and precedent. Whatever lay beyond the scope of their analysis and defied their laws, they disliked and dreaded. The outlying regions of mystery which hem life in on every side, are inaccessible to the intellect and irreducible in terms of its laws, were strangely repellent to them, and from such shadowy vistas they resolutely turned their eyes and fastened them on the solid ground at their feet. The familiar bustle of the town, the thronging streets of the city, the gay life of the drawing-room, and coffee-house, and play-house; or the more exalted life of Parliament and Court, the intrigues of State-chambers, the manœuvres of the battle-field; the aspects of human activity, wherever collective man in his social capacity goes through the orderly and comprehensible changes of his ceaseless pursuit of worldly happiness and worldly success; these were the subjects that for the men of the eighteenth century had absorbing charm: in seeking to master this intricate play of forces, to fathom the motives below it, to tabulate its experiences, to set up standards to guide the individual successfully through the intricacies of this commonplace, every-day world, they spent their utmost energy, and to these tasks

they instinctively limited themselves. In poetry, it was a generalized view of life that they aimed at, a semi-philosophical representation of man's nature and actions. Pope, the typical poet of the century, "stooped to truth and moralized his song." Dr. Johnson, the most authoritative critic of the century, taught that the poet should "remark general properties and large appearances . . . and must neglect the minuter discriminations, which one may have remarked, and another have neglected, or those characteristics which are alike obvious to vigilance and carelessness." In prose, the same moralizing and generalizing tendencies prevailed, and found their most adequate and thorough-going expression in the abstract and pretentiously latinized style of Dr. Johnson.

Everywhere thought gave the law; the senses and the imagination were kept jealously in subordination. The abstract, the typical, the general — these were everywhere exalted at the expense of the image, the specific experience, the vital fact. In religion, the same tendencies showed themselves. Orthodoxy and Deism alike were mechanical in their conception of Nature and of God. Both Free-thinkers and Apologists tried to systematize religious experience, and to rationalize theology. In the pursuit of historical evidences and of logical demonstrations of the truth or falsity of religion, genuine religious emotion was almost neglected, or was actually condemned. Enthusi-

asm was distrusted or abhorred; an enthusiast was a madman. Intense feeling of all kinds was regarded askance, and avoided as irrational, unsettling, prone to disarrange systems, and to overturn standards, and burst the bonds of formulas.

It was to this limited manner of living life and of conceiving of life that the great movement which, for lack of a better name, may be called the Romantic Movement, was to put an end. The Romanticists sought to enrich life with new emotions, to conquer new fields of experience, to come into imaginative touch with far distant times, to give its due to the encompassing world of darkness and mystery, and even to pierce through the darkness in the hope of finding, at the heart of the mystery, a transcendental world of infinite beauty and eternal truth. A keener sense of the value of life penetrated them and stirred them into imaginative sympathy with much that had left the men of the eighteenth century unmoved. They found in the naïve life of Nature and animals and children picturesqueness and grace that were wanting in the sophisticated life of the "town"; they delighted in the mysterious chiaroscuro of the Middle Ages, in its rich blazonry of passion, and its ever-changing spectacular magnificence; they looked forward with ardour into the future, and dreamed dreams of the progress of man; they opened their hearts to the influences of the spiritual world, and religion became to them some-

thing more than respectability and morality. In every way they endeavoured to give some new zest to life, to impart to it some fine novel flavour, to attain to some exquisite new experience. They sought this new experience imaginatively in the past, with Scott and Southey; they sought it with fierce insistence in foreign lands, following Byron, and in the wild exploitation of individual fancy and caprice; they sought it with Coleridge and Wordsworth through the revived sensitiveness of the spirit and its intuitions of a transcendental world of absolute reality; they sought it with Shelley in the regions of the vast inane.

Now it was in the midst of these restless conditions and under the influence of all this new striving and aspiration that Newman's youth and most impressionable years of development were spent, and he took colour and tone from his epoch to a degree that has often been overlooked. His work, despite its reactionary character, indeed, partly because of it, is a genuine expression of the Romantic spirit, and can be understood only when thus interpreted and brought into relation with the great tendencies of thought and feeling of the early part of our century. Of his direct indebtedness to Scott, Wordsworth, and Coleridge, he has himself made record in the *Apologia* and in his *Autobiographical Sketch*.[2] But far more im-

[1] *Apologia*, ed. 1890, p. 96.

[2] *Letters and Correspondence*, I, 18.

portant than the influence of any single man was the penetrating and determining action upon him of the Romantic atmosphere, overcharged as it was with intense feeling and tingling with new thought. The results of this action may be traced throughout his temperament and in all his work.

Mediævalism, as we have seen, was a distinctive note of the Romantic spirit, and, certainly, Newman was intensely alive to the beauty and the poetic charm of the life of the Middle Ages. One is sometimes tempted to describe him as a great mediæval ecclesiastic astray in the nineteenth century and heroically striving to remodel modern life in harmony with his temperamental needs. His imagination was possessed with the Romantic vision of the greatness of the mediæval Church, — of its splendour and pomp and dignity, and of its power over the hearts and lives of its members; and the Oxford movement was in its essence an attempt to reconstruct the English Church in harmony with this Romantic ideal, to rouse the Church to a vital realization of its own great traditions, and to restore to it the prestige and the dominating position it had had in the past. As Scott's imagination was fascinated with the picturesque paraphernalia of feudalism, — with its jousts, and courts of love, and its coats of mail and buff-jerkins, — so Newman's imagination was captivated by the gorgeous ritual and ceremonial, the art and architecture of mediæval Christianity, and found in them the sym-

bols of the spirit of mystery and awe which was for him the essentially religious spirit, and of the mystical truths of which revealed religion was made up. The Church, as Newman found it, was Erastian and worldly; it was apt to regard itself as merely an ally of the State for the maintenance of order and spread of morality; it was coldly rational in belief and theology, and prosaic in its conception of religious truth and of its own position and functions. Newman sought to revive in the Church a mediæval faith in its own divine mission and the intense spiritual consciousness of the Middle Ages; he aimed to restore to religion its mystical character, to exalt the sacramental system as the divinely appointed means for the salvation of souls, and to impose once more on men's imaginations the mighty spell of a hierarchical organization, the direct representative of God in the world's affairs. Such was the mediæval ideal to which he devoted himself. Both he and Scott substantially ruined themselves through their mediævalism. Scott's luckless attempt was to place his private and family life upon a feudal basis and to give it mediæval colour and beauty; Newman undertook a much nobler and more heroic, but more intrinsically hopeless task, — that of re-creating the whole English Church in harmony with mediæval conceptions.

Before Newman, Keble had already conceived of the English Church in this imaginative spirit. In

one of his *Essays*, Newman describes how Keble had made the Church "poetical," had "kindled hearts towards it," and by "his happy magic" had thrown upon its ritual, offices, and servants a glamour and beauty of which they had for many generations been devoid. It was to the continuance and the furtherance of this process of regeneration and transfiguration that Newman devoted the Tractarian movement.

But the essentially Romantic character of the new movement comes out in other ways than in its idealization of the Church. The relation of Newman and of his friends to Nature was closely akin to that of the Romanticists. Newman, like Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley, found Nature mysteriously beautiful and instinct with strange significance, a divinely elaborated language whereby God speaks through symbols to the human soul. Keble's *Christian Year* is full of this interpretation of natural sights and sounds as images of spiritual truth, and with this mystical conception of Nature Newman was in sympathy. Nature was for him as rich in its spiritual suggestiveness, as for Wordsworth or Shelley, and was as truly for him as for Carlyle or Goethe the visible garment of God. But in interpreting the emotional value of Nature Newman had recourse to a symbolism drawn ready-made from Christianity. The mystical beauty of Nature, instead of calling up in his imagination a Platonic ideal world, as with Shelley,

or adumbrating the world of eternal verity of German transcendentalism, as with Wordsworth and Coleridge, suggested the presence and power of seraphs and angels. Of the angels he says, "Every breath of air and ray of light and heat, every beautiful prospect, is, as it were, the skirts of their garments, the waving of the robes of those whose faces see God." Again, he asks, "What would be the thoughts of a man who, when examining a flower, or an herb, or a pebble, or a ray of light, which he treats as something so beneath him in the scale of existence, suddenly discovered that he was in the presence of some powerful being who was hidden behind the visible things he was inspecting, — who, though concealing his wise hand, was giving them their beauty, grace, and perfection, as being God's instrument for the purpose, — nay, whose robe and ornaments those objects were, which he was so eager to analyze?"[1]

Despite the somewhat conventional symbolism that pervades these passages, the mystical mood in the contemplation of Nature that underlies and suggests them is substantially the same that expresses itself through other imagery in the Romantic poets. In his intense sensitiveness, then, to the emotional value of the visible universe, and in his interpretation of the beauty of hill and valley and mountain and stream in terms of subjective emotion, Newman may justly be

[1] *Apologia*, p. 28.

said to have shared in the Romantic Return to Nature.

But in a still more important way, Newman's work was expressive of the Return to Nature. Under this term is to be included not merely the fresh delight that the Romanticists felt in the splendour of the firmament and the tender beauty or the sublimity of sea and land, but also their eager recognition of the value of the instinctive, the spontaneous, the *natural* in life, as opposed to the artificial, the self-conscious, the systematic, and the conventional. This recognition pervades all the literature of the first quarter of our century, and, in fact, in one form or another, is the characteristic note of what is most novel in the thought and the life of the time. In this Return to Nature Newman shared. For him, as for all the Romanticists, life itself is more than what we think about life, experience is infinitely more significant than our formulas for summing it up, and transcends them incalculably. General terms are but the makeshifts of logic and can never cope with the multiplicity and the intensity of sensation and feeling. Newman's elaborate justification of this indictment of logic is wrought out in the *Grammar of Assent* and in his Sermon on *Implicit and Explicit Reason.*

Throughout these discourses he pleads for those vital processes of thought and feeling and intuition which every man goes through for himself in

his acquisition of concrete truth, and which he can perhaps describe in but a stammering and inconsequent fashion in the terms of the schoolman's logic. It is by these direct, spontaneous processes, Newman urges, that men reach truth in whatever concrete matter they apply themselves to, and the truth that they reach need be none the less true because they have not the knack of setting forth syllogistically their reasons for accepting it. In his rejection, then, of formal demonstration as the sole method for attaining truth, in his recognition of the limitations of logic, and in his deep conviction of the surpassing importance of the spontaneous and instinctive in life Newman was at one with the Romanticists, and in all these particulars he shared in their Return to Nature.

This insistence of Newman's on the vital character of truth is a point, the importance of which cannot be exaggerated when the attempt is being made to grasp what is essential in his psychology and his ways of conceiving of life and of human nature. For him truth does not exist primarily, as for the formalist, in the formulas or the theorems of text-books, but in the minds and the hearts of living men. In these minds and hearts truth grows and spreads in countless subtle ways. Its appeal is through numberless other channels than those of the mind. Man is for Newman primarily an agent, — an acting creature, — not an intellect with merely accidental relations to an outer world.

First and foremost he is a doer, a bringer about of results, a realizer of hopes and ambitions and ideals. He is a mass of instincts and impulses, of prejudices and passions; and it is in response to these mighty and ceaselessly operating springs of action that he makes his way through the world and subdues it to himself. Truth, then, to commend itself to such a being, must come not merely by way of the brain, but also by that of the heart; it must not be a collection of abstract formulas, but must be concrete and vital. If it be religious truth, it must not take the form of logical demonstrations, but must be beautifully enshrined in the symbols of an elaborate ritual, illustrated in the lives of saints and doctors, authoritative and venerable in the creeds and liturgies of a hierarchical organization, irresistibly cogent as inculcated by the divinely appointed representatives of the Source of all Truth. In these forms religious truth may be able to impose itself upon individuals, to take complete possession of them, to master their minds and hearts, and to rule their lives.

But what shall be the test of such truth? How shall the individual be sure of its claims? How shall he choose between rival systems? Here, again, Newman refuses to be content with the formal and the abstract, and goes straight to life itself. In the search for a criterion of truth he rejects purely intellectual tests, and has recourse to tests which call into activity the whole of a

man's nature. It is the Illative Sense that detects and distinguishes truth, and the Illative Sense is simply the entire mind of the individual vigorously grasping concrete facts with all their implications for the heart and for the imagination and for conduct, and extracting their peculiar significance. This process, by which the individual searches for and attains truth in concrete matters, is admirably described in the passage quoted in the second chapter of the present Study, where the truth-seeker's progress is likened to that of a mountain-climber scaling a crag. The whole nature of a man must be put into play, if truth is to be won. The formal logic of the schools falls short of life; its symbols are general terms, colourless abstractions, from which all the palpitating warmth and persuasiveness of real life have been carefully drained. Propositions fashioned out of these colourless general terms cannot by any process of syllogistic jugglery be made to comprehend the whole truth of a religious system. They leave out inevitably what is most vital, and what is therefore most intimate in its appeal to the individual, — to his heart and practical instincts, and his imagination. "We proceed as far indeed as we can, by the logic of language, but we are obliged to supplement it by the more subtle and elastic logic of thought; for forms by themselves prove nothing."[1] "It is to the living mind that

[1] *Grammar of Assent*, ed. 1889, p. 359.

we must look for the means of using correctly principles of whatever kind."[1] "In all of these separate actions of the intellect, the individual is supreme and responsible to himself, nay, under circumstances, may be justified in opposing himself to the judgment of the whole world; though he uses rules to his great advantage, as far as they go, and is in consequence bound to use them."[2] Absolute "proof can never be furnished to us by the logic of words, for as certitude is of the mind, so is the act of inference which leads to it. Every one who reasons is his own centre."[3] The progress of the individual "is a living growth, not a mechanism; and its instruments are mental acts, not the formulas and contrivances of language."[4]

The foregoing analysis has tended to illustrate the facts that Newman aimed to make religion an intensely concrete, personal experience, and to fill out the spiritual life with widely varying and richly beautiful feeling; and that he also set himself everywhere, consciously and directly, against the eighteenth century ideal, according to which reason was the sole discoverer and arbiter of truth and regulator of conduct. In these respects, Newman's work was in perfect harmony with that of the Romanticists. Like them he was pleading for the spontaneous, for the emotions and the imagination, for what is most vital in life, in opposition to

[1] *Grammar of Assent*, ed. 1889, p. 360.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 353.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 345.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 350.

the formalists, the systematizers, and the devotees of logic.

In the following points, then, Newman's kinship with the Romanticists is recognizable: in his imaginative sympathy with the past, in the range and perspective of his historical consciousness, and in his devotion to an ideal framed largely in accordance with a loving reverence for mediæval life. His vein of mysticism, his imaginative sympathy with Nature, his interpretation of Nature as symbolic of spiritual truth, his rejection of reason as the guide of life, and his recognition of the inadequacy of generalizations and formulas to the wealth of actual life and to the intensity and variety of personal experience, are also characteristics that mark his relation to the men of his period.

Finally, his very style in the narrowest meaning of the term also classes Newman among Romantic writers. His debt to De Quincey has already been noted. Though he is rarely, if ever, so ornate as De Quincey, and though he perhaps never weaves his prose into such a lustrous, shining surface through the continual use of sensations and images as does De Quincey in his impassioned prose, yet the glowing beauty, the picture-making power, the occasional imaginative splendour, the elaborate swelling music of Newman's writings, place him as a master of prose in the same group with De Quincey, and Ruskin, and Carlyle, and part him from Landor, or Macaulay, or Matthew Arnold.

No prose can more surely send quivering over the nerves a sense of the shadowing mystery of life, than certain of Newman's sermons, and passages here and there in his *Apologia* and in his *Essays*. Through the play, then, of his imagination, its rhythms and beat of the wing, because of the ease with which in a moment his prose can carry the reader into regions of impassioned and mystical feeling, even because of the vital, intimate warmth and colour of his phrasing, — qualities so different from the hard, external glitter of Macaulay's specific, but rhetorical style, — Newman reveals his kinship with the great group of poets and prose-writers who deepened and enriched the imaginative life of the early part of our century. Ecclesiasticism and Academicism are proverbially conservative powers. It may be for this reason that the new spiritual forces of Romanticism did not renovate the Church through the Oxford movement until a full generation after they had made almost wholly their own the purely imaginative literature and life of the English nation.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

I

Admirers of Arnold's prose find it well to admit frankly that his style has an unfortunate knack of exciting prejudice. Emerson has somewhere spoken of the unkind trick fate plays a man when it gives him a strut in his gait. Here and there in Arnold's prose, there is just a trace — sometimes more than a trace — of such a strut. He condescends to his readers with a gracious elaborateness; he is at great pains to make them feel that they are his equals; he undervalues himself playfully; he assures us that "he is an unlearned bellettristic trifler"; he insists over and over again that "he is an unpretending writer, without a philosophy based on interdependent, subordinate, and coherent principles." All this he does smilingly; but the smile seems to many on whom its favours fall, supercilious; and the playful undervaluation of self looks shrewdly like an affectation. He is very debonair, — this apologetic writer, very self-assured, at times even jaunty.

Stanch admirers of Arnold have always relished this strain in his style; they have enjoyed

its delicate challenge, the nice duplicity of its innuendoes; they have found its insinuations and its covert, satirical humour infinitely entertaining and stimulating. Moreover, however seriously disposed they may be, however exacting of all the virtues from the author of their choice, they have been able to reconcile their enjoyment of Arnold with their serious inclinations, for they have been confident that these tricks of manner implied no essential or radical defect in Arnold's humanity, no lack either of sincerity or of earnestness or of broad sympathy.

Such admirers and interpreters of Arnold have been amply justified of their confidence since the publication in 1895 of Arnold's *Letters*. The Arnold of these letters is a man the essential integrity — *wholeness* — of whose nature is incontestable. His sincerity, kindliness, wide-ranging sympathy with all classes of men are unmistakably expressed on every page of his correspondence. We see him having to do with people widely diverse in their relations to him: with those close of kin, with chance friends, with many men of business or officials, with a wide circle of literary acquaintances, with workingmen, and with foreign *savants*. In all his intercourse the same sweet-tempered frankness and the same readiness of sympathy are manifest. There is never a trace of the duplicity or the treacherous irony that are to be found in much of his prose.

Moreover, the record that these *Letters* contain of close application to uncongenial tasks must have been a revelation to many readers who have had to rely upon books for their knowledge of literary men. Popular caricatures of Arnold had represented him as "a high priest of the kid-glove persuasion," as an incorrigible dilettante, a literary fop idling his time away over poetry and recommending the parmaceti of culture as the sovereignest thing in nature for the inward bruises of the spirit. This conception of Arnold, if it has at all maintained itself, certainly cannot survive the revelations of the *Letters*. The truth is beyond cavil that he was among the most self-sacrificingly laborious men of his time.

For a long period of years Arnold held the post of inspector of schools. Day after day, and week after week, he gave up one of the finest of minds, one of the most sensitive of temperaments, one of the most delicate of literary organizations, to the drudgery of examining in its minutest details the work of the schools in such elementary subjects as mathematics and grammar. On January 7, 1863, he writes to his mother, "I am now at the work I dislike most in the world — looking over and marking examination papers. I was stopped last week by my eyes, and the last year or two these sixty papers a day of close handwriting to read have, I am sorry to say, much tried my eyes for the time." Two years later he laments again: "I am being

driven furious by seven hundred closely written grammar papers, which I have to look over." During these years he was holding the Chair of Poetry at Oxford, and he had long since established his reputation as one of the foremost of the younger poets. Yet for a livelihood he was forced still to endure — and he endured them till within a few years of his death in 1888 — the exactions of this wearing and exasperating drudgery. Moreover, despite occasional outbursts of impatience, he gave himself to the work freely, heartily, and effectively. He was sent on several occasions to the Continent to examine and report on foreign school systems; his reports on German and French education show immense diligence of investigation, a thorough grasp of detail, and patience and persistence in the acquisition of facts that in and for themselves must have been unattractive and unrewarding.

The record of this severe labour is to be found in Arnold's *Letters*, and it must dispose once for all of any charge that he was a mere dilettante and coiner of phrases. Through a long period of years he was working diligently, wearisomely, in minutely practical ways, to better the educational system of England; he was persistently striving both to spread sounder ideals of elementary education and to make more effective the system actually in vogue. And thus, unpretentiously and laboriously, he was serving the cause of sweetness

and light as well as through his somewhat debonair contributions to literature.

In another way his *Letters* have done much to reveal the innermost core of Arnold's nature, and so, ultimately, to explain the genesis of his prose. They place it beyond doubt that in all he wrote Arnold had an underlying purpose, clearly apprehended and faithfully pursued. In 1867, in a letter to his mother, he says: "I more and more become conscious of having something to do and of a resolution to do it. . . . Whether one lives long or not, to be less and less *personal* in one's desires and workings is the great matter." In a letter of 1863 he had already written in much the same strain: "However, one cannot change English ideas as much as, if I live, I hope to change them, without saying imperturbably what one thinks, and making a good many people uncomfortable." And in a letter of the same year he exclaims: "It is very animating to think that one at last has a chance of *getting at* the English public. Such a public as it is, and such a work as one wants to do with it." A work to do! The phrase recalls Cardinal Newman and the well-known anecdote of his Sicilian illness, when through all the days of greatest danger he insisted that he should get well because he had a work to do in England. Despite Arnold's difference in temperament from Newman and the widely dissimilar task he proposed to himself, he was no less in earnest

than Newman, and no less convinced of the importance of his task.

The occasional supercilious jauntiness of Arnold's style, then, need not trouble even the most conscientious of his admirers. To many of his readers it is in itself, as has been already suggested, delightfully stimulating. Others, the more conscientious folk and perhaps also the severer judges of literary quality, are bound to find it artistically a blemish; but they need not at any rate regard it as implying any radical defect in Arnold's humanity or as the result of cheap cynicism or of inadequate sympathy. In point of fact, the true account of the matter seems rather to lie in the paradox that the apparent superciliousness of Arnold's style comes from the very intensity of his moral earnestness, and that the imperfections of his manner are often the result of an over-conscientious desire to conciliate.

II

What, then, was Arnold's controlling purpose in his prose-writing? What was the "work" that he "wanted to do with the English public"? In trying to find answers to these questions recourse will first be had to stray phrases in Arnold's prose; these phrases will give incidental glimpses, from different points of view, of his central ideal; later, their fragmentary suggestions will be brought

together into something like a comprehensive formula.

In the lectures on *Celtic Literature* Arnold points out, in closing, that it has been his aim to lead Englishmen to "reunite themselves with their better mind and with the world through science"; that he has sought to help them "conquer the hard unintelligence, which was just then their bane; to supple and reduce it by culture, by a growth in the variety, fulness, and sweetness of their spiritual life." In the Preface to his first volume of *Essays* he explains that he is trying "to pull out a few more stops in that powerful, but at present somewhat narrow-toned organ, the modern Englishman." In *Culture and Anarchy* he assures us that his object is to convince men of the value of "culture"; to incite them to the pursuit of "perfection"; to help "make reason and the will of God prevail." And, again, in the same work he declares that he is striving to intensify throughout England "the impulse to the development of the whole man, to connecting and harmonizing all parts of him, perfecting all, leaving none to take their chance."

These phrases give, often with capricious picturesqueness, hints of the prevailing intention with which Arnold writes. They may well be supplemented by a series of phrases in which, in similarly picturesque fashion, he finds fault with life as it actually exists in England, with the indi-

vidual Englishman as he encounters him from day to day; these phrases, through their critical implications, also reveal the purpose that is always present in Arnold's mind, when he addresses his countrymen. "Provinciality," Arnold points out as a widely prevalent and injurious characteristic of English literature; it argues a lack of centrality, carelessness of ideal excellence, undue devotion to relatively unimportant matters. Again, "arbitrariness" and "eccentricity" are noticeable traits both of English literature and scholarship; Arnold finds them everywhere deforming Professor Newman's interpretations of Homer, and he further comments on them as in varying degrees "the great defect of English intellect — the great blemish of English literature." In religion he takes special exception to the "loss of totality" that results from sectarianism; this is the penalty, Arnold contends, that the Nonconformist pays for his hostility to the established church; in his pursuit of his own special enthusiasm the Nonconformist becomes, like Ephraim, "a wild ass alone by himself."

From all these brief quotations this much at least is plain, that what Arnold is continually recommending is the complete development of the human type, and that what he is condemning is departure from some finely conceived ideal of human excellence — from some scheme of human nature in which all its powers have full and har-

monious play. The various phrases that have been quoted, alike the positive and the negative ones, imply, as Arnold's continual purpose in his prose-writings, the recommendation of this ideal of human excellence and the illustration of the evils that result from its neglect. Evidently, his imagination is haunted by some symmetrical scheme of character — by some exquisitely conceived pattern of perfection — wherein manners and knowledge, and passion and religion, all have their due value, and work together for righteousness. With this scheme in mind, he goes through the length and breadth of England, scanning each class of men he meets, and questioning how far its members conform to his type. And his continual purpose is to stir in the minds of his fellow-countrymen as keen a sense as may be of the value of this perfect type and of the dangers of disregarding it. The significance and the scope of this purpose will become clearer if we consider some of the imperfect ideals that Arnold finds operative in place of his absolute ideal, and note their misleading and depraving effects.

One such partial ideal is the worship of the excessively practical and the relentlessly utilitarian as the only things in life worth while. England is a prevailingly practical nation, and our age is a prevailingly practical age; the unregenerate product of this nation and age is the Philistine, and against the Philistine Arnold never wearies of

inveighing. The Philistine is the swaggering enemy of the children of light, of the chosen people, of those who love art and ideas disinterestedly. The Philistine cares solely for business, for developing the material resources of the country, for starting companies, building bridges, making railways, and establishing plants. The machinery of life — its material organization — monopolizes all his attention. He judges of life by the outside, and is careless of the things of the spirit. The Philistine may, of course, be religious; but his religion is as materialistic as his every-day existence; his heaven is a triumph of engineering skill, and his ideal of future bliss is, in Sydney Smith's phrase, to eat "*pâtés de foie gras* to the sound of trumpets." Against men of this class Arnold cannot show himself too cynically severe. They are pitiful distortions; the practical instincts have usurped, and have destroyed the symmetry and integrity of the human type. The senses and the will to live are monopolizing and determine all the man's energy toward utilitarian ends. The power of beauty, the power of intellect and knowledge, the power of social manners, are atrophied. Society is in serious danger unless men of this class can be touched with a sense of their shortcomings; made aware of the larger values of life; made pervious to ideas; brought to recognize the importance of the things of the mind and the spirit.

Another partial ideal, the prevalence of which

Arnold laments, is the narrowly and unintelligently religious ideal. The middle-class Englishman is, according to Arnold, a natural "Hebraist"; his whole energy is spent, when he is at his best, in the struggle to obey certain traditional rules of morality. In the origin of these rules, or in the question as to whether or no they be founded in right reason, he has little or no interest. In general, he is careless or contemptuous of speculation and of whatever savours of philosophy. He is intent upon the fulfilment of a conventional code of duty. *Conduct*, narrowly conceived, is his only concern in life. Beauty has no charm for him; art, no meaning. The free play of mind in the disinterested pursuit of truth seems waste of energy or even vicious self-assertion. All the bright irresponsibility, the sparkling delight in life and in thought for their own sakes, that are characteristic of what Arnold calls the "Hellenistic" temper — its burning eagerness to *know*, its strenuous will to be *sure* that its truth is really truth — all these qualities and instincts seem to the Hebraist abnormal, pagan, altogether evil. The Puritanism of the seventeenth century was the almost unrestricted expression of the Hebraistic temper, and from the conceptions of life that were then wrought out the middle classes in England have never wholly escaped. The Puritans looked out upon life with a narrow vision, recognized only a few of its varied interests, and provided for the needs of only a part

of man's nature. Yet their theories and conceptions of life — theories and conceptions that were limited in the first place by the age in which they originated, and in the second place by a Hebraistic lack of sensitiveness to the manifold charm of beauty and knowledge — these limited theories and conceptions have imposed themselves constrainingly on many generations of Englishmen. To-day they remain, in all their narrowness and with an ever-increasing disproportion to existing conditions, the most influential guiding principles of large masses of men. Such men spend their lives in a round of petty religious meetings and employments. They think all truth is summed up in their little cut-and-dried Biblical interpretations. New truth is uninteresting or dangerous. Art distracts from religion, and is a siren against whose seductive chanting the discreet religious Ulysses seals his ears. To Arnold this whole view of life seems sadly mistaken, and the men who hold it seem fantastic distortions of the authentic human type. The absurdities and the dangers of the unrestricted Hebraistic ideal he satirizes or laments in *Culture and Anarchy,* in *Literature and Dogma,* in *God and the Bible,* and in *St. Paul and Protestantism.*

Still another kind of deformity arises when the intellect grows self-assertive and develops overweeningly. To this kind of distortion the modern man of science is specially prone; his exclusive

study of material facts leads to crude, unregenerate strength of intellect, and leaves him careless of the value truth may have for the spirit and of its glimmering suggestions of beauty. Yes, and for the philosopher and the scholar, too, over-intellectualism has its peculiar dangers. The devotee of a system of thought is apt to lose touch with the real values of life, and in his exorbitant desire for unity and thoroughness of organization, to miss the free play of vital forces that gives to life its manifold charm, its infinite variety, and its ultimate reality. Bentham and Comte are examples of the evil effects of this rabid pursuit of system. "Culture is always assigning to system-makers and systems a smaller share in the bent of human destiny than their friends like." As for the pedant, he is merely the miser of facts, who grows withered in hoarding the vain fragments of precious ore of whose use he has lost the sense. Men of all these various types offend through their fanatical devotion to truth; for, indeed, as some one has in recent years well said, the intellect is "but a *parvenu*," and the other powers of life, despite the Napoleonic irresistibleness of the new-comer, have rights that deserve respect. Over-intellectualism, then, like the over-development of any other power, leads to disproportion and disorder.

Such being some of the partial ideals against which Arnold warns his readers, what account does he give of that perfect human type in all its integ-

rity, in terms of which he criticises these aberrations or deformities? Perhaps Arnold felt that any attempt at an exact and systematic definition of this type would be somewhat grotesque and presumptuous; at any rate, he has avoided such an attempt. Still, he has recorded clearly, in many passages, his ideas as regards the powers in man that are essential to perfect humanity, and that must all be duly recognized and developed, if man is to attain in full scope what nature offers. A representative passage may be quoted from the lecture on *Literature and Science:* "When we set ourselves to enumerate the powers which go to the building up of human life, and say that they are the power of conduct, the power of intellect and knowledge, the power of beauty, and the power of social life and manners, he [Professor Huxley] can hardly deny that this scheme, though drawn in rough and plain lines enough, and not pretending to scientific exactness, does yet give a fairly true representation of the matter. Human nature is built up of these powers; we have the need for them all. When we have rightly met and adjusted the claims for them all, we shall then be in a fair way for getting soberness and righteousness with wisdom."

These same ideas are presented, under a somewhat different aspect and with somewhat different terminology, in the first chapter of *Culture and Anarchy:* "The great aim of culture [is] the aim

of setting ourselves to ascertain what perfection is and to make it prevail." Culture seeks "the determination of this question through all the voices of human experience which have been heard upon it, — of art, science, poetry, philosophy, history, as well as of religion, — in order to give a greater fulness and certainty to its solution. . . . Religion says: *The Kingdom of God is within you;* and culture, in like manner, places human perfection in an *internal* condition, in the growth and predominance of our humanity proper, as distinguished from our animality. It places it in the ever-increasing efficacy and in the general harmonious expansion of those gifts of thought and feeling which make the peculiar dignity, wealth, and happiness of human nature. As I have said on a former occasion: 'It is in making endless additions to itself, in the endless expansion of its powers, in endless growth in wisdom and beauty, that the spirit of the human race finds its ideal. To reach this ideal, culture is an indispensable aid, and that is the true value of culture.'"

In such passages as these Arnold comes as near as he ever comes to defining the perfect human type. He does not profess to define it universally and in abstract terms, for indeed he "hates" abstractions almost as inveterately as Burke hated them. He does not even describe concretely for men of his own time and nation the precise equipoise of powers essential to perfection. Yet he

names these powers, suggests the ends towards which they must by their joint working contribute, and illustrates, through examples, the evil effects of the preponderance or absence of one and another. Finally, in the course of his many discussions, he describes in detail the method by which the delicate adjustment of these rival powers may be secured in the typical man; suggests who is to be the judge of the conflicting claims of these powers, and indicates the process by which this judge may most persuasively lay his opinions before those whom he wishes to influence. The method for the attainment of the perfect type is *culture;* the censor of defective types and the judge of the rival claims of the coöperant powers is the *critic;* and the process by which this judge clarifies his own ideas and enforces his opinions on others is *criticism.*

III

We are now at the centre of Arnold's theory of life and hold the key to his system of belief, so far as he had a system. His reasons for attaching to the work of the critic the importance he palpably attached to it are at once apparent. Criticism is the method by which the perfect type of human nature is at any moment to be apprehended and kept in uncontaminate clearness of outline before the popular imagination. The ideal critic is the man of nicest discernment in matters

intellectual, moral, æsthetic, social; of perfect equipoise of powers; of delicately pervasive sympathy; of imaginative insight; who grasps comprehensively the whole life of his time; who feels its vital tendencies and is intimately aware of its most insistent preoccupations; who also keeps his orientation towards the unchanging norms of human endeavour; and who is thus able to note and set forth the imperfections in existing types of human nature and to urge persuasively a return in essential particulars to the normal type. The function of criticism, then, is the vindication of the ideal human type against perverting influences, and Arnold's prose-writings will for the most part be found to have been inspired in one form or another by a single purpose: the correction of excess in some human activity and the restoration of that activity to its proper place among the powers that make up the ideal human type.

Culture and Anarchy (1869) was the first of Arnold's books to illustrate adequately this far-reaching conception of criticism. His special topic is, in this case, social conditions in England. Politicians, he urges, whose profession it is to deal with social questions, are engrossed in practical matters and biassed by party considerations; they lack the detachment and breadth of view to see the questions at issue in their true relations to abstract standards of right and wrong. They mistake means for ends, machinery for the results that

machinery is meant to secure; they lose all sense of values and exalt temporary measures into matters of sacred import; finally, they come to that pass of ineptitude which Arnold symbolizes by the enthusiasm of Liberals over the measure to enable a man to marry his deceased wife's sister. What is needed to correct these absurd misapprehensions is the free play of critical intelligence. The critic from his secure coign of vantage must examine social conditions dispassionately; he must determine what is essentially wrong in the inner lives of the various classes of men around him, and so reveal the real sources of those social evils which politicians are trying to remedy by external readjustments and temporary measures.

And this is just the task that Arnold undertakes in *Culture and Anarchy*. He sets himself to consider English society in its length and breadth with a view to discovering what is its essential constitution, what are the typical classes that enter into it, and what are the characteristics of these classes. So far as concerns classification he ultimately accepts, it is true, as adequate to his purpose, the traditional division of English society into upper, middle, and lower classes. But he then goes on to give an analysis of each of these classes that is novel, penetrating, in the highest degree stimulating. He takes a typical member of each class and describes him in detail, intellectually, morally, socially; he points out his sources

of strength and his sources of weakness. He compares him as a type with the abstract ideal of human excellence, and notes wherein his powers "fall short or exceed." He indicates the reaction upon the social and political life of the nation of these various defects and excesses, their inevitable influence in producing social misadjustment and friction. Finally, he urges that the one remedy that will correct these errant social types and bring them nearer to the perfect human type is culture, increase in *vital* knowledge.

The details of Arnold's application of this conception of culture as a remedy for the social evils of the time, every reader may follow out for himself in *Culture and Anarchy*. One point in Arnold's conception, however, is to be noted forthwith; it is a crucial point in its influence on his theorizings. By culture Arnold means increase of knowledge; yes, but he means something more; culture is for Arnold not merely an intellectual matter. Culture is the best knowledge made operative and dynamic in life and character. Knowledge must be vitalized; it must be intimately conscious of the whole range of human interests; it must ultimately subserve the whole nature of man. Continually, then, as Arnold is pleading for the spread of ideas, for increase of light, for the acceptance on the part of his fellow-countrymen of new knowledge from the most diverse sources, he is as keenly alive as any one to the dangers of over-intellectual-

ism. The undue development of the intellectual powers is as injurious to the individual as any other form of deviation from the perfect human type.

This distrust of over-intellectualism is the ultimate ground of Arnold's hostility to the claims of Physical Science to primacy in modern education. His ideas on the relative educational value of the physical sciences and of the humanities are set forth in the well-known discourse on *Literature and Science*. Arnold is ready, no one is more ready, to accept the conclusions of science on all topics that fall within its range; whatever its authenticated spokesmen have to say upon man's origin, his moral nature, his relations to his fellows, his place in the physical universe, his religions, his sacred books — all these utterances are to be received with entire loyalty as far as they can be shown to embody the results of expert scientific observation and thought. But for Arnold, the great importance of modern scientific truth does not for a moment make clear the superiority of the physical sciences over the humanities as a means of educational discipline. The study of the sciences tends merely to intellectual development, to the increase of mental power; the study of literature, on the other hand, trains a man emotionally and morally, develops his human sympathies, sensitizes him temperamentally, rouses his imagination, and elicits his sense of beauty. Science puts

before the student the crude facts of nature, bids him accept them dispassionately, rid himself of all discolouring moods as he watches the play of physical force, and convert himself into pure intelligence; he is simply to observe, to analyze, to classify, and to systematize, and he is to go through these processes continually with facts that have no human quality, that come raw from the great whirl of the cosmic machine. As a discipline, then, for the ordinary man, the study of science tends not a whit towards humanization, towards refinement, towards temperamental regeneration; it tends only to develop an accurate trick of the senses, fine observation, crude intellectual strength. These powers are of very great importance; but they may also be trained in the study of literature, while at the same time the student, as Sir Philip Sidney long ago pointed out, is being led and drawn "to as high a perfection as our degenerate souls, made worse by their clay lodgings, can be capable of." Arnold, then, with characteristic anxiety for the integrity of the human type, urges the superior worth to most young men of a literary rather than a scientific training. Literature nourishes the whole spirit of man; science ministers only to the intellect.

The same insistent desire that culture be vital is at the root of Arnold's discomfort in the presence of German scholarship. For the thoroughness and the disinterestedness of this scholarship

he has great respect; but he cannot endure its trick of losing itself in the letter, its "pedantry, slowness," its way of "fumbling" after truth, its "ineffectiveness."[1] "In the German mind," he exclaims in *Literature and Dogma*, "as in the German language, there does seem to be something splay, something blunt-edged, unhandy, infelicitous, — some positive want of straightforward, sure perception."[2] Of scholarship of this splay variety, that comes from exaggerated intellectuality and from lack of a delicate temperament and of nice perceptions, Arnold is intolerant. Such scholarship he finds working its customary mischief in Professor Francis Newman's translation of Homer, and, accordingly, he gives large parts of the lectures on *Translating Homer* to the illustration of its shortcomings and maladroitness; he is bent on showing how inadequate is great learning alone to cope with any nice literary problem. Newman's philological knowledge of Greek and of Homer is beyond dispute, but his taste may be judged from his assertion that Homer's verse, if we could hear the living Homer, would affect us "like an elegant and simple melody from an African of the Gold Coast."[3] The remedy for such inept scholarship lies in culture, in the vitalization of knowledge. The scholar must not be a

[1] *Celtic Literature*, p. 75.

[2] *Literature and Dogma*, p. xxi.

[3] *On Translating Homer*, p. 295.

mere knower; all his powers must be harmoniously developed.

A last illustration of Arnold's insistence that knowledge be vital may be drawn from his writings on religion and theology. Again criticism and culture are the passwords that open the way to a new and better order of things. Formulas, Arnold urges, have fastened themselves constrainingly upon the English religious mind. Traditional interpretations of the Bible have come to be received as beyond cavil. These interpretations are really human inventions — the product of the ingenious thinking of theologians like Calvin and Luther. Yet they have so authenticated themselves that for most readers to-day the Bible means solely what it meant for the exacerbated theological mind of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. If religion is to be vital, if knowledge of the Bible is to be genuine and real, there must be a critical examination of what this book means for the disinterested intelligence of to-day; the Bible, as literature, must be interpreted anew, sympathetically and imaginatively; the moral inspiration the Bible has to offer, even to men who are rigidly insistent on scientific habits of thought and standards of historical truth, must be disengaged from what is unverifiable and transitory, and made real and persuasive. "I write," Arnold declares, "to convince the lover of religion that by following habits of intellectual seriousness he need not, so

far as religion is concerned, lose anything. Taking the Old Testament as Israel's magnificent establishment of the theme, *Righteousness is salvation!* taking the New as the perfect elucidation by Jesus of what righteousness is and how salvation is won, I do not fear comparing even the power over the soul and imagination of the Bible, taken in this sense, — a sense which is at the same time solid, — with the like power in the old materialistic and miraculous sense for the Bible, which is not."[1] This definition of what Arnold hopes to do for the Bible may be supplemented by a description of the method in which culture works towards the ends desired: "Difficult, certainly, is the right reading of the Bible, and true culture, too, is difficult. For true culture implies not only knowledge, but right tact and justness of judgment, forming themselves by and with knowledge; without this tact it is not true culture. Difficult, however, as culture is, it is necessary. For, after all, the Bible is *not* a talisman, to be taken and used literally; neither is any existing church a talisman, whatever pretensions of the sort it may make, for giving the right interpretation of the Bible. Only true culture can give us this interpretation; so that if conduct is, as it is, inextricably bound up with the Bible and the right interpretation of it, then the importance of culture becomes unspeakable. For if conduct is

[1] *God and the Bible*, p. xxxiv.

necessary (and there is nothing so necessary), culture is necessary."[1]

In all these various ways, then, that have been illustrated, culture is a specific against the ills that society is heir to. Culture is vital knowledge, and the critic is its fosterer and guardian; culture and criticism work together for the preservation of the integrity of the human type against all the disasters that threaten it from the storm and stress of modern life. Politics, religion, scholarship, science, each has its special danger for the individual; each seizes upon him, subdues him relentlessly to the need of the moment and the requirements of some particular function, and converts him often into a mere distorted fragment of humanity. Against this tyranny of the moment, against the specializing and materializing trend of modern life, criticism offers a powerful safeguard. Criticism is ever concerned with archetypal excellence, is continually disengaging, with fine discrimination, what is transitory and accidental from what is permanent and essential in all that man busies himself about, and is thus perpetually helping every individual to the apprehension of his "best self," to the development of what is real and absolute and the elimination of what is false or deforming. And in doing all this the critic acts as the appreciator of life; he is not the abstract thinker. He apprehends the ideal intuitively;

[1] *Literature and Dogma*, p. xxvii.

he reaches it by the help of the feelings and the imagination and a species of exquisite tact, not through a series of syllogisms; he is really a poet, rather than a philosopher.

This conception of the nature and functions of criticism makes intelligible and justifies a phrase of Arnold's that has often been impugned — his description of poetry as a criticism of life. To this account of poetry it has been objected that criticism is an intellectual process, while poetry is primarily an affair of the imagination and the heart; and that to regard poetry as a criticism of life is to take a view of poetry that tends to convert it into mere rhetorical moralizing — the decorative expression in rhythmical language of abstract truth about life. This misinterpretation of Arnold's meaning becomes impossible, if the foregoing theory of criticism be borne in mind. Criticism is the determination and the representation of the archetypal, of the ideal. Moreover, it is not a determination of the archetypal formally and theoretically, through speculation or the enumeration of abstract qualities; Arnold's disinclination for abstractions has been repeatedly noted. The process to be used in criticism is a vital process of appreciation, in which the critic, sensitive to the whole value of human life, to the appeal of art and of conduct and of manners as well as of abstract truth, feels his way to a synthetic grasp upon what is ideally best, and portrays this concretely and

persuasively for the popular imagination. Such an appreciator of life, if he produce beauty in verse, if he embody his vision of the ideal in metre, will be a poet. In other words, the poet is the appreciator of human life who sees in it most sensitively, inclusively, and penetratingly what is archetypal, and evokes his vision before others through rhythm and rhyme. In this sense poetry can hardly be denied to be a criticism of life; it is the winning portrayal of the ideal of human life as this ideal shapes itself in the mind of the poet. Such a criticism of life Dante gives, a determination and portrayal of what is ideally best in life according to mediæval conceptions; a representation of life in its integrity with a due adjustment of the claims of all the powers that enter into it — friendship, ambition, patriotism, loyalty, religion, artistic ardour, love. Such a criticism of life Shakespeare incidentally gives in terms of the full scope of Elizabethan experience in England, with due imaginative setting forth of the splendid vistas of possible achievement and unlimited development that the new knowledge and the discoveries of the Renaissance had opened. In short, the great poet is the typically sensitive, penetrative, and suggestive appreciator of life, — who calls to his aid, to make his appreciation as resonant and persuasive as possible, as potent as possible over men's minds and hearts, all the emotional and imaginative resources of language, — rhythm, fig-

ures, allegory, symbolism, — whatever will enable him to impose his appreciation of life upon others and to insinuate into their souls his sense of the relative values of human acts and characters and passions; whatever will help him to make more overweeningly beautiful and insistently eloquent his vision of truth and beauty. In this sense the poet is the limiting ideal of the appreciative critic, and poetry is the ultimate criticism of life — the finest portrayal each age can attain to of what seems to it in life most significant and delightful.

IV

The purpose with which Arnold writes is now fairly apparent. His aim is to shape in happy fashion the lives of his fellows; to free them from the bonds that the struggle for existence imposes upon them; to enlarge their horizons, to enrich them spiritually, and to call all that is best within them into as vivid play as possible. When we turn to Arnold's literary criticism we shall find this purpose no less paramount.

A glance through the volumes of Arnold's essays renders it clear that his selection of a poet or a prose-writer for discussion was usually made with a view to putting before English readers some desirable trait of character for their imitation, some temperamental excellence that they are lacking in, some mode of belief that they neglect, some

habit of thought that they need to cultivate. Joubert is studied and portrayed because of his single-hearted love of light, the purity of his disinterested devotion to truth, the fine distinction of his thought, and the freedom of his spirit from the sordid stains of worldly life. Heine is a typical leader in the war of emancipation, the arch-enemy of Philistinism, and the light-hearted, indomitable foe of prejudice and cant. Maurice and Eugénie de Guérin are winning examples of the spiritual distinction that modern Romanism can induce in timely-happy souls. Scherer, whose critiques upon Milton and Goethe are painstakingly reproduced in the *Mixed Essays*, represents French critical intelligence in its best play — acute, yet comprehensive; exacting, yet sympathetic; regardful of *nuances* and delicately refining, and yet virile and constructive. Of the importance for modern England of emphasis on all these qualities of mind and heart, Arnold was securely convinced.

Moreover, even when his choice of subject is determined by other than moral considerations, his treatment is apt, none the less, to reveal his ethical bias. Again and again in his essays on poetry, for example, it is the substance of poetry that he is chiefly anxious to handle, while the form is left with incidental analysis. Wordsworth is the poet of joy in widest commonalty spread — the poet whose criticism of life is most sound and enduring and salutary. Shelley is a febrile creature, inse-

cure in his sense of worldly values, "a beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain."[1] The essay on *Heine* helps us only mediately to an appreciation of the volatile beauty of Heine's songs, or to an intenser delight in the mere surface play of hues and moods in his verse. From the essay on *George Sand*, to be sure, we receive many vivid impressions of the emotional and imaginative scope of French romance; for this essay was written *con amore* in the revivification of an early mood of devotion, and in an unusually heightened style; the essay on *Emerson* is the one study that has in places somewhat of the same lyrical intensity and the same vividness of realization. Yet even in the essay on *George Sand*, the essayist is, on the whole, bent on revealing the temperament of the woman rather in its decisive influence on her theories of life than in its reaction upon her art as art. There is hardly a word of the Romance as a definite literary form, of George Sand's relation to earlier French writers of fiction, or of her distinctive methods of work as a portrayer of the great human spectacle. In short, literature as art, literary forms as definite modes of artistic expression, the technique of the

[1] This image may have been suggested by a sentence of Joubert's: "Plato loses himself in the void, but one sees the play of his wings, one hears their rustle. . . . It is good to breathe his air, but not to live upon him." The translation is Arnold's own. See his *Joubert*, in *Essays in Criticism*, I, 294.

literary craftsman, receive, for the most part, from Arnold slight attention.

Perhaps the one piece of work in which Arnold set himself, with some thoroughness, to the discussion of a purely literary problem was his series of lectures on *Translating Homer*. These lectures were produced before his sense of responsibility for the moral regeneration of the Philistine had become importunate, and were addressed to an academic audience. For these reasons, the treatment of literary topics is more disinterested and less interrupted by practical considerations. Indeed, as will be presently noted in illustration of another aspect of Arnold's work, these lectures contain very subtle and delicate appreciations, show everywhere exquisite responsiveness to changing effects of style, and enrich gratefully the vocabulary of impressionistic criticism.

Even in these exceptional lectures, however, Arnold's ethical interest asserts itself. In the course of them he gives an account of the grand style in poetry, — of that poetic manner that seems to him to stand highest in the scale of excellence; and he carefully notes as an essential of this manner, — of this grand style, — its moral power; "it can form the character, . . . is edifying, . . . can refine the raw natural man, . . . can transmute him."[1] This definition of the grand style will be discussed presently in connection with Arnold's

[1] *On Translating Homer*, ed. 1883, p. 197.

general theory of poetry; it is enough to note here that it illustrates the inseparableness in Arnold's mind between art and morals.

His description of poetry as a criticism of life has already been mentioned. This doctrine is early implied in Arnold's writings, for example, in the passage just quoted from the lectures on *Translating Homer;* it becomes more explicit in the *Last Words,* appended to these lectures, where the critic asserts that "the noble and profound application of ideas to life is the most essential part of poetic greatness."[1] It is elaborated in the essays on *Wordsworth* (1879), on the *Study of Poetry* (1880), and on *Byron* (1881). "It is important, therefore," the essay on *Wordsworth* assures us, "to hold fast to this: that poetry is at bottom a criticism of life; that the greatness of a poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life, — to the question: How to live."[2] And in the essay on the *Study of Poetry* Arnold urges that "in poetry, as a criticism of life under the conditions fixed for such a criticism by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty, the spirit of our race will find, . . . as time goes on and as other helps fail, its consolation and stay."[3]

With this doctrine of the indissoluble connection between the highest poetic excellence and essential nobleness of subject-matter probably only the most

[1] *On Translating Homer*, ed. 1883, p. 295.
[2] *Essays*, ed. 1891, II, p. 143. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

irreconcilable advocates of art for art's sake would quarrel. So loyal an adherent of art as Walter Pater suggests a test of poetic "greatness" substantially the same with Arnold's. "It is on the quality of the matter it informs or controls, its compass, its variety, its alliance to great ends, or the depth of the note of revolt, or the largeness of hope in it, that the greatness of literary art depends, as *The Divine Comedy, Paradise Lost, Les Misérables, The English Bible,* are great art."[1] This may be taken as merely a different phrasing of Arnold's principle that "the greatness of a poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life — to the question: How to live." Surely, then, we are not at liberty to press any objection to Arnold's general theory of poetry on the ground of its being, in its essence, over-ethical.

There remains nevertheless the question of emphasis. In the application to special cases of this test of essential worth, either the critic may be constitutionally biassed in favour of a somewhat restricted range of definite ideas about life, or even when he is fairly hospitable towards various moral idioms, he may still be so intent upon making ethical distinctions as to fail to give their due to the purely artistic qualities of poetry. It is in this latter way that Arnold is most apt to offend. The emphasis in the discussions of Wordsworth, Shelley, Byron, Keats, Gray, and Milton is prevail-

[1] Pater's *Appreciations*, ed. 1890, p. 36.

ingly on the ethical characteristics of each poet; and the reader carries away from an essay a vital conception of the play of moral energy and of spiritual passion in the poet's verse rather than an impression of his peculiar adumbration of beauty, the characteristic rhythms of his imaginative movement, the delicate colour modulations on the surface of his image of life.

It must, however, be borne in mind that Arnold has specially admitted the incompleteness of his description of poetry as "a criticism of life"; this criticism, he has expressly added, must be made in conformity "to the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty." "The profound criticism of life" characteristic of "the few supreme masters" must exhibit itself "in indissoluble connection with the laws of poetic truth and beauty."[1] Is there, then, to be found in Arnold any account of certain laws the observance of which secures poetic beauty and truth? Is there any description of the special ways in which poetic beauty and truth manifest themselves, of the formal characteristics to be found in poetry where poetic beauty and truth are present? Does Arnold either suggest the methods the poet must follow to attain these qualities, or classify the various subordinate effects through which poetic beauty and truth invariably reveal their presence? The most apposite parts of his writings to search for some declaration on these

[1] *Essays*, ed. 1891, II, pp. 186–187.

points are the lectures on *Translating Homer*, and the second series of his essays which deal chiefly with the study of poetry. Here, if anywhere, we ought to find a registration of beliefs as regards the precise nature and source of poetic beauty and truth.

And indeed throughout all these writings, which run through a considerable period of time, Arnold makes fairly consistent use of a half-dozen categories for his analyses of poetic effects. These categories are substance and matter, style and manner, diction and movement. Of the substance of really great poetry we learn repeatedly that it must be made up of ideas of profound significance "on man, on nature, and on human life."[1] This is, however, merely the prescription already so often noted that poetry, to reach the highest excellence, must contain a penetrating and ennobling criticism of life. In the essay on *Byron*, however, there is something formally added to this requisition of "truth and seriousness of substance and matter"; besides these, "felicity and perfection of diction and manner, as these are exhibited in the best poets, are what constitute a criticism of life made in conformity with the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty."[2] There must then be felicity and perfection of diction and manner in poetry of the highest order; these terms are somewhat vague, but serve at least to guide us on our analytic way.

[1] *Essays*, ed. 1891, II, p. 141. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 187.

In the essay on the *Study of Poetry*, there is still farther progress made in the description of poetic excellence. "To the style and manner of the best poetry, their special character, their accent is given by their diction, and, even yet more, by their movement. And though we distinguish between the two characters, the two accents, of superiority" (*i.e.* between the superiority that comes from substance and the superiority that comes from style), "yet they are nevertheless vitally connected one with the other. The superior character of truth and seriousness, in the matter and substance of the best poetry, is inseparable from the superiority of diction and movement marking its style and manner. The two superiorities are closely related, and are in steadfast proportion one to the other. So far as high poetic truth and seriousness are wanting to a poet's matter and substance, so far also, we may be sure, will a high poetic stamp of diction and movement be wanting to his style and manner."[1]

Now that there is this intimate and necessary union between a poet's mode of conceiving life and his manner of poetic expression, is hardly disputable. The image of life in a poet's mind is simply the outside world transformed by the complex of sensations and thoughts and emotions peculiar to the poet; and this image inevitably frames for itself a visible and audible expression that delicately

[1] *Essays*, ed. 1891, II, p. 22.

utters its individual character — distils that character subtly through word and sentence, rhythm and metaphor, image and figure of speech, and through their integration into a vital work of art. Moreover, the poet's style is itself in general the product of the same personality which determines his image of life, and must therefore be, like his image of life, delicately striated with the markings of his play of thought and feeling and fancy. The close correspondence, then, between the poet's subject-matter and his manner or style is indubitable. The part of Arnold's conclusion or the point in his method that is regrettable is the exclusive stress that he throws on this dependence of style upon worth of substance. He converts style into a mere function of the moral quality of a poet's thought about life, and fails to furnish any delicately studied categories for the appreciation of poetic style apart from its moral implications.

Take, for example, the judgments passed in the *Study of Poetry* upon various poets; in every instance the estimate of the poet's style turns upon the quality of his thought about life. Is it Chaucer whose right to be ranked as a classic is mooted? He cannot be ranked as a classic because "the substance of" his poetry has not "high seriousness."[1] Is it Burns whose relative rank is being fixed? Burns through lack of "absolute sincerity" falls short of "high seriousness," and, hence, is

[1] *Essays*, ed. 1891, II, p. 33.

not to be placed among the classics. And thus continually with Arnold, effects of style are merged in moral qualities, and the reader gains little insight into the refinements of poetical manner except as these derive directly from the poet's moral consciousness. The categories of style and manner, diction and movement, are everywhere subordinated to the categories of substance and matter, are treated as almost wholly derivative. "Felicity and perfection of diction and manner," wherever they are admittedly present, are usually explained as the direct result of the poet's lofty conception of life. Such a treatment of questions of style does not further us much on our way to a knowledge of the "laws of poetic beauty and poetic truth."

Doubtless somewhat more disinterested analyses of style may be found in the lectures on *Translating Homer*. These discussions do not reach very definite conclusions, but they at least consider poetic excellence as for the moment dependent on something else than the moral mood of the poet. For example, the grand style is analyzed into two varieties, the grand style in severity and the grand style in simplicity. Each of these styles is described and illustrated so that it enters into the reader's imagination and increases his sensitiveness to poetic excellence. Somewhat later in the lectures, the distinction between real simplicity in poetic style and sophisticated simplicity is drawn

with exquisite delicacy of appreciation. Throughout these passages, there is an effort to deal directly with artistic effects for their own sake and apart from their significance as expressive of *ethos*. Yet even here Arnold's ethical bias reveals itself in a tendency, while he is describing the moods back of these artistic qualities, to use words that have moral implications, and that suggest the issue of such moods in conduct. Self-restraint, proud gravity, are among the moods that are found back of the grand style in severity; over-refinement, super-subtle sophistication, account for Tennyson's *simplesse*.

To bring together, then, the results of this somewhat protracted analysis: Arnold ostensibly admits that poetry, to be of the highest excellence, must, in addition to containing a criticism of life of profound significance, conform to the laws of poetic beauty and truth. He accepts as necessary categories, for the appreciation of poetical excellence, style and manner, diction and movement. Yet his most important general assertion about these latter purely formal determinations of poetry is that they are inseparably connected with substance and matter; similarly, whenever he discusses artistic effects, he is apt to find them interesting simply as serving to interpret the artist's prevailing mood towards life; and even where, as is at times doubtless the case, he escapes for the moment from his ethical interest and appreciates with imaginative

delicacy the individual quality of a poem or a poet's style, he is nearly always found sooner or later explaining this quality as originating in the poet's peculiar *ethos*. As for any systematic or even incidental study of "the laws of poetic beauty and truth," we search for it through his pages in vain.

V

But it would be wrong in characterizing Arnold's essays to attribute their lack of theorizing about questions of art solely to his preoccupation with conduct. For theory in general and for abstractions in general, — for all sorts of philosophizing, — Arnold openly professes his dislike. "Perhaps we shall one day learn," he says, in his essay on *Wordsworth*, "to make this proposition general, and to say: Poetry is the reality, philosophy the illusion." Distrust of the abstract and of the purely theoretical shows itself throughout his literary criticism and determines many of its characteristics.

His hostility to systems and to system-makers has already been pointed out; this hostility admits of no exception in favour of the systematic critic. "There is the judgment of ignorance, the judgment of incompatibility, the judgment of envy and jealousy. Finally, there is the systematic judgment, and this judgment is the most worthless of all. . . . Its author has not really his eye upon

the professed object of his criticism at all, but upon something else which he wants to prove by means of that object. He neither really tells us, therefore, anything about the object, nor anything about his own ignorance of the object. He never fairly looks at it; he is looking at something else."[1] This hypnotizing effect that a preconceived theory exerts on a critic, is Arnold's first reason for objecting to systematic criticism; the critic with a theory is bound to find what he goes in search of, and nothing else. He goes out — to change somewhat one of Arnold's own figures — like Saul, the son of Kish, in search of his father's asses; and he comes back with the authentic animals instead of the traditional windfall of a kingdom.

Nor is preoccupation with a pet theory the sole incapacity that Arnold finds in the systematic critic; such a critic is almost sure to be over-intellectualized, a victim of abstractions and definitions, dependent for his judgments on conceptions, and lacking in temperamental sensitiveness to the appeal of literature as art. He is merely a triangulator of the landscape of literature, and moves resolutely in his process of triangulation from one fixed point to another; he finds significant only such parts of his literary experience as he can sum up in a definite abstract formula at some one of these arbitrary halting-places; his ultimate opinion of the ground he covers is merely the sum total of

[1] *Mixed Essays*, ed. 1883, p. 209.

a comparatively small number of such abstract expressions. To the manifold wealth of the landscape in colour, in light, in shade, and in poetic suggestiveness, the system-monger, the theoretical critic, has all the time been blind.

Knowledge, too, even though it be not severely systematized, may interfere with the free play of critical intelligence. An oversupply of unvitalized facts or ideas, even though these facts or ideas be not organized into an importunate theory, may prove disastrous to the critic. This danger Arnold has amusingly set forth in his *Last Words* on Homeric translation: "Much as Mr. Newman was mistaken when he talked of my rancour, he is entirely right when he talks of my ignorance. And yet, perverse as it seems to say so, I sometimes find myself wishing, when dealing with these matters of poetical criticism, that my ignorance were even greater than it is. To handle these matters properly, there is needed a poise so perfect that the least overweight in any direction tends to destroy the balance. Temper destroys it, a crotchet destroys it, even erudition may destroy it. To press to the sense of the thing with which one is dealing, not to go off on some collateral issue about the thing, is the hardest matter in the world. The 'thing itself' with which one is here dealing — the critical perception of poetic truth — is of all things the most volatile, elusive, and evanescent; by even pressing too impetuously after it, one

runs the risk of losing it. The critic of poetry should have the finest tact, the nicest moderation, the most free, flexible, and elastic spirit imaginable; he should be, indeed, the 'ondoyant et divers,' the *undulating and diverse* being of Montaigne. The less he can deal with his object simply and freely, the more things he has to take into account in dealing with it, — the more, in short, he has to encumber himself, — so much the greater force of spirit he needs to retain his elasticity. But one cannot exactly have this greater force by wishing for it; so, for the force of spirit one has, the load put upon it is often heavier than it will well bear. The late Duke of Wellington said of a certain peer that 'it was a great pity his education had been so far too much for his abilities.' In like manner one often sees erudition out of all proportion to its owner's critical faculty. Little as I know, therefore, I am always apprehensive, in dealing with poetry, lest even that little should prove too much for my abilities."[1]

Discreet ignorance, then, is Arnold's counsel of perfection to the would-be critic. And, accordingly, he himself is desultory from conscientious motives and unsystematic by fixed rule. There are two passages in his writings where he explains confidentially his methods and his reasons for choosing them. The first occurs in a letter of 1864: "My sinuous, easy, unpolemical mode of proceed-

[1] *On Translating Homer*, p. 245.

ing has been adopted by me, first, because I really think it the best way of proceeding, if one wants to get at, and keep with, truth; secondly, because I am convinced only by a literary form of this kind being given to them can ideas such as mine ever gain any access in a country such as ours."[1] The second passage occurs in the Preface to his first series of *Essays in Criticism* (1865): "Indeed, it is not in my nature — some of my critics would rather say not in my power — to dispute on behalf of any opinion, even my own, very obstinately. To try and approach truth on one side after another, not to strive or cry, not to persist in pressing forward, on any one side, with violence and self-will, it is only thus, it seems to me, that mortals may hope to gain any vision of the mysterious goddess, whom we shall never see except in outline. He who will do nothing but fight impetuously towards her, on his own one favourite particular line, is inevitably destined to run his head into the folds of the black robe in which she is wrapped."[2]

Such, then, is Arnold's ideal of critical method. The critic is not to move from logical point to point as, for example, Francis Jeffrey was wont, in his essays, to move, with an advocate's devotion to system and desire to make good some definite conclusion. Rather he is to give rein to his temperament; he is to make use of intuitions, imaginations, hints that touch the heart, as well as

[1] *Letters*, I, 282. [2] *Essays*, ed. 1891, I, p. v.

abstract principles, syllogisms, and arguments; and so he is to reach out tentatively through all his powers after truth if haply he may find her; in the hope that thus, keeping close to the concrete aspects of his subject, he may win to an ever more inclusive and intimate command of its surface and configurations. The type of mind most apt for this kind of critical work is the "free, flexible, and elastic spirit," described in the passage just quoted from the *Last Words;* the "undulating and diverse being of Montaigne."

A critic of this type will palpably concern himself slightly with abstractions, with theorizings, with definitions. And, indeed, Arnold's unwillingness to define becomes at times almost ludicrous. "Nothing has raised more questioning among my critics than these words — *noble, the grand style.* . . . Alas! the grand style is the last matter in the world for verbal definition to deal with adequately. One may say of it as is said of faith: 'One must feel it in order to know it.'"[1] Similarly in the *Study of Poetry,* Arnold urges: "Critics give themselves great labour to draw out what in the abstract constitutes the characters of a high quality of poetry. It is much better to have recourse to concrete examples. . . . If we are asked to define this mark and accent in the abstract, our answer must be: No, for we should thereby be darkening the question, not clearing it." Again: "I may dis-

[1] *On Translating Homer,* ed. 1883, p. 264.

cuss what in the abstract constitutes the grand style; but that sort of general discussion never much helps our judgment of particular instances."[1] These passages are characteristic; rarely indeed does Arnold consent to commit himself to the control of a definition. He prefers to convey into his readers' mind a living realization of the thing or the object he treats of rather than to put before them its logically articulated outlines.

Moreover, when he undertakes the abstract discussion of a general term, he is apt to be capricious in his treatment of it and to follow in his subdivisions and classifications some external clue rather than logical structure. In the essay on *Celtic Literature* he discusses the various ways of handling nature in poetry, and finds four such ways — the conventional way, the faithful way, the Greek way, and the magical way. The classification recommends itself through its superficial charm and facility, yet rests on no psychological truth, or at any rate carries with it, as Arnold treats it, no psychological suggestions; it gives no swift insight into the origin in the poet's mind and heart of these different modes of conceiving of nature. Hence the classification, as Arnold uses it, is merely a temporary makeshift for rather gracefully grouping effects, not an analytic interpretation of these effects through a reduction of them to their varying sources in thought and feeling.

[1] *On Translating Homer*, ed. 1883, p. 194.

This may be taken as typical of Arnold's critical methods. As we read his essays we have little sense of making definite progress in the comprehension of literature as an art among arts, as well as in the appreciation of an individual author or poem. We are not being intellectually oriented, as in reading the most stimulating critical work; we are not getting an ever-surer sense of the points of the compass. Essays, to have this orienting power, need not be continually prating of theories and laws; they need not be rabidly scientific in phrase or in method. But they must issue from a mind that has come to an understanding with itself about the genesis of art in the genius of the artist; about the laws that, when the utmost plea has been made for freedom and caprice, regulate artistic production; about the history and evolution of art forms; and about the relations of the arts among themselves and to the other activities of life. It may fairly be doubted if Arnold had ever wrought out for himself consistent conclusions on all or most of these topics. Indeed, the mere mention of his name in connection with such a formal list of topics suggests the kind of mock-serious deprecatory paragraph with which the "unlearned belletristic trifler" was wont to reply to charges of dilettantism — a paragraph sure to carry in its tail a stinging bit of sarcasm at the expense of pedantry and unenlightened formalism. And yet, great as must be every one's respect for the thorough schol-

arship and widely varied accomplishment that Arnold made so light of and carried off so easily, the doubt must nevertheless remain whether a firmer grasp on theory, and a more consistent habit of thinking out literary questions to their principles, would not have invigorated his work as a critic and given it greater permanence and richer suggestiveness.

VI

It is, then, as an appreciator of what may perhaps be called the spiritual qualities of literature that Arnold is most distinctively a furtherer of criticism. An appreciator of beauty, — of true beauty wherever found, — that is what he would willingly be; and yet, as the matter turns out, the beauty that he most surely enjoys and reveals has invariably a spiritual aroma, — is the finer breath of intense spiritual life. Or, if spiritual be too mystical a word to apply to Homer and Goethe, perhaps Arnold should rather be termed an appreciator of such beauty in literature as carries with it an inevitable suggestion of elevation and nobleness of character in the author.

The importance of appreciation in criticism Arnold has described in one of the *Mixed Essays:* "Admiration is salutary and formative; . . . but things admirable are sown wide, and are to be gathered here and gathered there, not all in one place; and until we have gathered them wherever they are

to be found, we have not known the true salutariness and formativeness of admiration. The quest is large; and occupation with the unsound or half-sound, delight in the not good or less good, is a sore let and hindrance to us. Release from such occupation and delight sets us free for ranging farther, and for perfecting our sense of beauty. He is the happy man, who, encumbering himself with the love of nothing which is not beautiful, is able to embrace the greatest number of things beautiful in his life." [1]

On this disinterested quest, then, for the beautiful, Arnold in his essays nominally fares forth. Yet certain limitations in his appreciation, over and beyond his prevalent ethical interest, must at once be noted. Music, painting, and sculpture have seemingly nothing to say to him. In his *Letters* there are only a few allusions to any of these arts, and such as occur do not surpass in significance the comments of the chance loiterer in foreign galleries or visitor of concert rooms. In his essays there are none of the correlations between the effects and methods of literature and those of kindred arts that may do so much either to individualize or to illustrate the characteristics of poetry. For Arnold, literature and poetry seem to make up the whole range of art.

Within these limits, however, — the limits imposed by preoccupation with conduct and by care-

[1] *Mixed Essays*, ed. 1883, p. 210.

lessness of all arts except literature, — Arnold has been a prevailing revealer of beauty. Not his most hostile critic can question the delicacy of his perception, so far as he allows his perception free play. On the need of nice and ever nicer discriminations in the apprehension of the shifting values of literature, he has himself often insisted. Critics who let their likes and dislikes assert themselves turbulently, to the destruction of fine distinctions, always fall under Arnold's condemnation. "When Mr. Palgrave dislikes a thing, he feels no pressure constraining him, either to try his dislike closely or to express it moderately; he does not mince matters, he gives his dislike all its own way. . . . He dislikes the architecture of the Rue Rivoli, and he puts it on the level with the architecture of Belgravia and Gower Street; he lumps them all together in one condemnation; he loses sight of the shade, the distinction which is here everything." For a similar blurring of impressions, Professor Newman is taken to task, though in Newman's case the faulty appreciations are due to a different cause: "Like all learned men, accustomed to desire definite rules, he draws his conclusions too absolutely; he wants to include too much under his rules; he does not quite perceive that in poetical criticism the shade, the fine distinction, is everything; and that, when he has once missed this, in all he says he is in truth but beating the air." Here, again, what Arnold pleads for is tem-

peramental sensitiveness, delicacy of perception. To appreciate literature more and more sensitively in terms of "an undulating and diverse temperament," this is the ideal that he puts before literary criticism.

His own appreciations of poetry are probably richest, most discriminating, and most disinterested in the lectures on *Translating Homer*. The imaginative tact is unfailing with which he renders the contour and the subject-qualities of the various poems that he comments on; and equally noteworthy is the divining instinct with which he captures the spirit of each poet and sets it before us with a phrase or a symbol. The "inversion and pregnant conciseness" of Milton's style, its "laborious and condensed fulness"; the plainspokenness, freshness, vigorousness, and yet fancifulness and curious complexity of Chapman's style; Spenser's "sweet and easy slipping movement"; Scott's "bastard epic style"; the "one continual falsetto" of Macaulay's "pinchbeck *Roman Ballads*," — all these characterizations are delicately sure in their phrasing and suggestion, and are the clearer because the various styles are made to stand in continual contrast with Homer's style, the rapidity, directness, simplicity, and nobleness of which Arnold keeps ever present in our consciousness. Incidentally, too, such suggestive discriminations as that between *simplesse* and *simplicité*, the "semblance" of simplicity and the "real quality," are

wrought out for the reader as the critic goes on with his pursuit of the essential qualities of Homeric thought and diction. To read these lectures is a thoroughly tempering process; a process that renders the mind and imagination permanently finer in texture, more elastic, more sensitively sure in tone, and subtly responsive to the demands of good art.

The essay on the *Study of Poetry*, which was written as preface to Ward's *English Poets*, is also rich in appreciation, and at times almost as disinterested as the lectures on Homer; yet perhaps never quite so disinterested. For in the *Study of Poetry* Arnold is persistently aware of his conception of "the grand style" and bent on winning his readers to make it their own. Only poets who attain this grand style deserve to be "classics," and the continual insistence on the note of "high seriousness" — its presence or absence — becomes rather wearisome. Moreover, Arnold's preoccupation with this ultimate manner and quality tends to limit the freedom and delicate truth of his appreciations of other manners and minor qualities. At times, one is tempted to charge Arnold with some of the unresponsiveness of temperament that he ascribes to systematic critics, and to find even Arnold himself under the perilous sway of a fixed idea. Yet, when all is said, the *Study of Poetry* is full of fine things, and does much to widen the range of appreciation, and, at the same time, to

make appreciation more certain. "The liquid diction, the fluid movement of Chaucer, his large, free, sound representation of things"; Burns's "touches of piercing, sometimes almost intolerable, pathos," his "archness," too, and his "soundness"; Shelley, "that beautiful spirit building his many-coloured haze of words and images 'Pinnacled dim in the intense inane'"; these, and other interpretations like them, are easily adequate and carry the qualities of each poet readily into the minds and imaginations of sympathetic readers. Appreciation is much the richer for this essay on the *Study of Poetry.*

Nor must Arnold's suggestive appreciations of prose style be forgotten. Several of them have passed into standard accounts of clearly recognized varieties of prose diction. Arnold's phrasing of the matter has made all sensitive English readers permanently more sensitive to "the warm glow, blithe movement, and soft pliancy of life" of the Attic style, and also permanently more hostile to "the over-heavy richness and encumbered gait" of the Asiatic style. Equally good is his account of the Corinthian style: "It has glitter without warmth, rapidity without ease, effectiveness without charm. Its characteristic is that it has no *soul;* all it exists for, is to get its ends, to make its points, to damage its adversaries, to be admired, to triumph. A style so bent on effect at the expense of soul, simplicity, and delicacy; a style so

little studious of the charm of the great models; so far from classic truth and grace, must surely be said to have the note of provinciality."[1] "Middle-class Macaulayese" is his name for Hepworth Dixon's style; a style which he evidently regards as likely to gain favour and establish itself. "I call it Macaulayese . . . because it has the same internal and external characteristics as Macaulay's style; the external characteristic being a hard, metallic movement with nothing of the soft play of life, and the internal characteristic being a perpetual semblance of hitting the right nail on the head without the reality. And I call it middle-class Macaulayese, because it has these faults without the compensation of great studies and of conversance with great affairs, by which Macaulay partly redeemed them."[2] It will, of course, be noted that these latter appreciations deal for the most part with divergences from the beautiful in style, but they none the less quicken and refine the æsthetic sense.

Finally, throughout the two series of miscellaneous essays there is, in the midst of much business with ethical matters, an often-recurring free play of imagination in the interests, solely and simply, of beauty. Many are the happy windfalls these essays offer of delicate interpretation both of poetic effect and of creative movement, and many are

[1] *Essays*, ed. 1891, I, p. 75.
[2] *Friendship's Garland*, ed. 1883, p. 279.

the memorable phrases and symbols by which incidentally the essential quality of a poet or prose-writer is securely lodged in the reader's consciousness.

And yet, wide ranging and delicately sensitive as are Arnold's appreciations, the feeling will assert itself, in a final survey of his work in literary criticism, that he nearly always has designs on his readers and that appreciation is a means to an end. The end in view is the exorcism of the spirit of Philistinism. Arnold's conscience is haunted by this hideous apparition as Luther's was by the devil, and he is all the time metaphorically throwing his inkstand at the spectre. Or, to put the matter in another way, his one dominating wish is to help modern Englishmen to "conquer the hard unintelligence" which is "their bane; to supple and reduce it by culture, by a growth in the variety, fulness, and sweetness of their spiritual life"; and the appreciative interpretation of literature to as wide a circle of readers as possible seems to him one of the surest ways of thus educing in his fellow-countrymen new spiritual qualities. It must not be forgotten that Matthew Arnold was the son of Thomas Arnold, master of Rugby; there is in him a hereditary pedagogic bias — an inevitable trend towards moral suasion. The pedagogic spirit has suffered a sea-change into something rich and strange, and yet traces of its origin linger about it. Criticism with Arnold is rarely, if ever, irre-

sponsible; it is our schoolmaster to bring us to culture.

In a letter of 1863 Arnold speaks of the great transformation which "in this concluding half of the century the English spirit is destined to undergo." "I shall do," he adds, "what I can for this movement in literature; freer perhaps in that sphere than I could be in any other, but with the risk always before me, if I cannot charm the wild beast of Philistinism while I am trying to convert him, of being torn in pieces by him."[1] In charming the wild beast Arnold ultimately succeeded; and yet there is a sense in which he fell a victim to his very success. The presence of the beast, and the necessity of fluting to him debonairly and winningly, fastened themselves on Arnold's imagination, and subdued him to a comparatively narrow range of subjects and set of interests. From the point of view, at least, of what is desirable in appreciative criticism, Arnold was injured by his sense of responsibility; he lacks the detachment and the delicate mobility that are the redeeming traits of modern dilettantism.

If, then, we regard Arnold as a writer with a task to accomplish, with certain definite regenerative purposes to carry out, with a body of original ideas about the conduct of life to inculcate, we must conclude that he succeeded admirably in his work, followed out his ideas with persistence and

[1] *Letters*, I, 240.

temerity through many regions of human activity, and embodied them with unwearying ingenuity and persuasiveness in a wide range of discussions. If, on the other hand, we consider him solely as a literary critic, we are forced to admit that he is not the ideal literary critic; he is not the ideal literary critic because he is so much more, and because his interests lie so decisively outside of art. Nor is this opinion meant to imply an ultimate theory of art for art's sake, or to suggest any limitation of criticism to mere impressionism or appreciation. Literature must be known historically and philosophically before it can be adequately appreciated; that is emphatically true. Art may or may not be justifiable solely as it is of service to society; that need not be debated. But, in any event, literary criticism, if it is to reach its utmost effectiveness, must regard works of art for the time being as self-justified integrations of beauty and truth, and so regarding them must record and interpret their power and their charm. And this temporary isolating process is just the process which Arnold very rarely, for the reasons that have been traced in detail, is willing or able to go through with.

VII

When we turn to consider Arnold's literary style, we are forced to admit that this, too, has suffered from the strenuousness of his moral pur-

pose; it has been unduly sophisticated, here and there, because of his desire to charm "the wild beast of Philistinism." To this purpose and this desire is owing, at least in part, that falsetto note — that half-querulous, half-supercilious artificiality of tone — which is now and then to be heard in his writing. To exaggerate the extent to which this note is audible would doubtless be easy; an unprejudiced reader will find long continuous passages of even Arnold's most elaborately designed writing free from any trace of undue self-consciousness or of gentle condescension. And yet it is undeniable that when, apart from his *Letters*, Arnold's prose, as a whole, is compared with that of such a writer, for example, as Cardinal Newman, there is in Arnold's style, as the ear listens for the quality of the bell-metal, not quite the same beautifully clear and sincere resonance. There seems to be, now and then, some unhappy warring of elements, some ill-adjustment of overtones, a trace of some flaw in mixing or casting.

Are not these defects in Arnold's style due to his somewhat self-conscious attempt to fascinate a recalcitrant public? Is it not the assumption of a manner that jars on us often in Arnold's less happy moments? Has he not the pose of the man who overdoes bravado with the hope of getting cleverly through a pass which he feels a bit trying to his nerves? Arnold has a keen consciousness of the very stupid beast of Philistinism lying in

wait for him; and in the stress of the moment he is guilty of a little exaggeration of manner; he is just a shade unnatural in his flippancy; he treads his measure with an unduly mincing flourish.

Arnold's habit of half-mocking self-depreciation and of insincere apology for supposititious personal shortcomings has already been mentioned; to his controversial writings, particularly, it gives often a raspingly supercilious tone. He insists with mock humbleness that he is a "mere bellettristic trifler"; that he has no "system of philosophy with principles coherent, interdependent, subordinate, and derivative" to help him in the discussion of abstract questions. He assures us that he is merely "a feeble unit" of the "English middle class"; he deprecates being called a professor because it is a title he shares "with so many distinguished men — Professor Pepper, Professor Anderson, Professor Frickel, and others — who adorn it," he feels, much more than he does. These mock apologies are always amusing and yet a bit exasperating too. Why should Arnold regard it, we ask ourselves, as such a relishing joke — the possibility that he has a defect? The implication of almost arrogant self-satisfaction is troublesomely present to us. Such passages certainly suggest that Arnold had an ingrained contempt for the "beast" he was charming.

Yet, when all is said, much of this supercilious satire is irresistibly droll, and refuses to be gain-

said. One of his most effective modes of ridiculing his opponents is through conjuring up imaginary scenes in which some ludicrous aspect of his opponent's case or character is thrown into diverting prominence. Is it the pompous, arrogant self-satisfaction of the prosperous middle-class tradesman that Arnold wishes to satirize? And more particularly is it the futility of the *Saturday Review* in holding up Benthamism — the systematic recognition of such a smug man's ideal of selfish happiness — as the true moral ideal? Arnold represents himself as travelling on a suburban railway on which a murder has recently been committed, and as falling into chat with the middle-class frequenters of this route. The demoralization of these worthy folk, Arnold assures us, was "something bewildering." "Myself a transcendentalist (as the *Saturday Review* knows), I escaped the infection; and, day after day, I used to ply my agitated fellow-travellers with all the consolations which my transcendentalism would naturally suggest to me. I reminded them how Cæsar refused to take precautions against assassination, because life was not worth having at the price of an ignoble solicitude for it. I reminded them what insignificant atoms we all are in the life of the world. 'Suppose the worst to happen,' I said, addressing a portly jeweller from Cheapside; 'suppose even yourself to be the victim; *il n'y a pas d'homme nécessaire.* We should miss you for a day or two

upon the Woodford Branch; but the great mundane movement would still go on, the gravel walks of your villa would still be rolled, dividends would still be paid at the Bank, omnibuses would still run, there would still be the old crush at the corner of Fenchurch Street.' All was of no avail. Nothing could moderate in the bosom of the great English middle class, their passionate, absorbing, almost bloodthirsty clinging to life." This is, of course, "admirable fooling"; and equally, of course, the little imaginary scene serves perfectly the purposes of Arnold's argument and turns into ridicule the narrowness and overweening self-importance of the smug tradesman.

Another instance of Arnold's ability to conjure up fancifully a scene of satirical import may be adduced from the first chapter of *Culture and Anarchy*. Arnold has been ridiculing the worship of mere "bodily health and vigour" as ends in themselves. "Why, one has heard people," he exclaims, "fresh from reading certain articles of the *Times* on the Registrar General's returns of marriages and births in this country, who would talk of our large English families in quite a solemn strain, as if they had something in itself, beautiful, elevating, and meritorious in them; as if the British Philistine would have only to present himself before the Great Judge with his twelve children, in order to be received among the sheep as a matter of right!"

It is a fact worth remarking that in his prose

Arnold's imagination seems naturally to call up and visualize only such scenes as those that have just been quoted — scenes that are satirically and even maliciously suggestive; scenes, on the other hand, that have the limpid light and the winning quality of many in Cardinal Newman's writings — scenes that rest the eye and commend themselves simply and graciously to the heart — are in Arnold's prose rarely, if ever, to be found. This seems the less easy to explain inasmuch as his poetry, though of course not exceptionally rich in colour, nevertheless shows everywhere a delicately sure sense of the surface of life. Nor is it only the large sweep of the earth-areas or the diversified play of the human spectacle that is absent from Arnold's prose; his imagination does not even make itself exceptionally felt through concrete phrasing or warmth of colouring; his style is usually intellectual almost to the point of wanness, and has rarely any of the heightened quality of so-called poetic prose. In point of fact, this conventional restraint in Arnold's style, this careful adherence to the mood of prose, is a very significant matter; it distinguishes Arnold both as writer and as critic of life from such men as Carlyle and Mr. Ruskin. The meaning of this quietly conventional manner will be later considered in the discussion of Arnold's relation to his age.

The two pieces of writing where Arnold's style has most fervour and imaginative glow are the

essay on *George Sand* and the discourse on *Emerson.* In each case he was returning in the choice of his subject to an earlier enthusiasm, and was reviving a mood that had for him a certain romantic consecration. George Sand had opened for him, while he was still at the University, a whole world of rich and half-fearful imaginative experience; a world where he had delighted to follow through glowing southern landscapes the journeyings of picturesquely rebellious heroes and heroines, whose passionate declamation laid an irresistible spell on his English fancy. Her love and portrayal of rustic nature had also come to him as something graciously different from the sterner and more moral or spiritual interpretation of rustic life to be found in Wordsworth's poems. Her personality, in all its passionate sincerity and with its pathetically unrewarded aspirations, had imposed itself on Arnold's imagination both as this personality was revealed in her books and as it was afterward encountered in actual life. All these early feelings Arnold revives in a memorial essay written in 1877, one year after George Sand's death. From first to last the essay has a brooding sincerity of tone, an unconsidering frankness, and an intensity and colour of phrase that are noteworthy. The descriptions of nature, both of the landscapes to be found in George Sand's *romances* and of those in the midst of which she herself lived, have a luxuriance and sensuousness of surface that Arnold rarely con-

descends to. The tone of unguarded devotion may be represented by part of the concluding paragraph of the essay: "It is silent, that eloquent voice! it is sunk, that noble, that speaking head! We sum up, as we best can, what she said to us, and we bid her adieu. From many hearts in many lands a troop of tender and grateful regrets converge towards her humble churchyard in Berry. Let them be joined by these words of sad homage from one of a nation which she esteemed, and which knew her very little and very ill." There can be no question of the passionate sincerity and the poetic beauty of this passage.

Comparable in atmosphere and tone to this essay on *George Sand* is the discourse on *Emerson*, in certain parts of which Arnold again has the courage of his emotions. In the earlier paragraphs there is the same revivification of a youthful mood as in the essay on *George Sand*. There is also the same only half-restrained pulsation in the rhythm, an emotional throb that at times almost produces an effect of metre. "Forty years ago, when I was an undergraduate at Oxford, voices were in the air there which haunt my memory still. Happy the man who in that susceptible season of youth hears such voices! they are a possession to him forever." Of this discourse, however, only the introduction and the conclusion are of this intense, self-communing passionateness; the analysis of Emerson's qualities as writer and thinker, that makes up the

greater part of the discourse, has Arnold's usual colloquial, self-consciously wary tone.

A fairly complete survey of the characteristics of Arnold's style may perhaps best be obtained by recognizing in his prose-writings four distinct manners. First may be mentioned his least compromising, severest, most exact style; it is most consistently present in the first of the *Mixed Essays*, that on *Democracy* (1861). The sentences are apt to be long and periodic. The structure of the thought is defined by means of painstakingly accurate articulations. Progress in the discussion is systematic and is from time to time conscientiously noted. The tone is earnest, almost anxious. A strenuous, systematic, responsible style, we may call it. Somewhat mitigated in its severities, somewhat less palpably official, it remains the style of Arnold's technical reports upon education and of great portions of his writings on religious topics. It is, however, most adequately exhibited in the essay on *Democracy*.

Simpler in tone, easier, more colloquial, more casual, is the style that Arnold uses in his literary essays, in the uncontroversial parts of the lectures on *Translating Homer*, and in *Culture and Anarchy*. This style is characterized by its admirable union of ease, simplicity, and strength; by the affability of its tone, an affability, however, that never degenerates into over-familiarity or loses dignified restraint; by its disregard of method, or of the more

pretentious manifestations of method; and by the delicate certainty with which, when at its best, it takes the reader, despite its apparently casual movement, over the essential aspects of the subject under discussion. This is really Arnold's most distinctive manner, and it will require, after his two remaining manners have been briefly noted, some further analysis.

Arnold's third style is most apt to appear in controversial writings or in his treatment of subjects where he is particularly aware of his enemy, or particularly bent on getting a hearing from the inattentive through cleverly malicious satire, or particularly desirous of carrying things off with a nonchalant air. It appears in the controversial parts of the lectures on *Translating Homer*, in many chapters of *Culture and Anarchy*, and runs throughout *Friendship's Garland*. Its peculiarly rasping effect upon many readers has already been described. It is responsible for much of the prejudice against Arnold's prose.

Arnold's fourth style — intimate, rich in colour, intense in feeling, almost lyrical in tone — is the style that has just been noted as appearing in the essays on *George Sand* and on *Emerson*. There are not many passages in Arnold's prose where this style has its way with him. But these passages are so individual, and seem to reveal Arnold with such novelty and truth, that the style that pervades them deserves to be put by itself.

The style usually taken as characteristically Arnold's is that here classed as his second, with a generous admixture of the third. Many of the qualities of this style have already been suggested as illustrative of certain aspects of Arnold's temperament or habits of thought. Various important points, however, still remain to be appreciated.

Colloquial in its rhythms and its idiom this style surely is. It is fond of assenting to its own propositions; "well" and "yes" often begin its sentences — signs of its casual and tentative mode of advance. Arnold's frequent use of "well" and "yes" and neglect of the anxiously demonstrative "now," at the opening of his sentences, mark unmistakably the unrigorousness of his method. An easily negligent treatment of the sentence, too, is often noticeable; a subject is left suspended while phrase follows phrase, or even while clause follows clause, until, quite as in ordinary talk, the subject must be repeated, the beginning of the sentence must be brought freshly to mind. Often Arnold ends a sentence and begins the next with the same word or phrase; this trick is better suited to talk than to formal discourse. Indeed, Arnold permits himself not a few of the inaccuracies of every-day speech. He uses the cleft infinitive; he introduces relative clauses with superfluous "and" or "but"; he confuses the present participle with the verbal noun and speaks, for example, of "the creating a current"; and he usually "tries and does" a thing

instead of "trying to do" it. Finally, his prose abounds in exclamations and in italicized words or phrases, and so takes on much of the movement and rhythm of talk, as in the following passage: "But the gloomy, oppressive dream is now over. '*Let us return to Nature!*' And all the world salutes with pride and joy the Renascence, and prays to Heaven: 'Oh, that *Ishmael* might live before thee!' Surely the future belongs to this brilliant newcomer, with his animating maxim: *Let us return to Nature!* Ah, what pitfalls are in that word *Nature!* Let us return to art and science, which are a part of Nature; yes. Let us return to a proper conception of righteousness, to a true sense of the method and secret of Jesus, which have been all denaturalized; yes. But, 'Let us return to *Nature!*' — do you mean that we are to give full swing to our inclinations?"[1] The colloquial character of these exclamations and the search, through the use of italics, for stress like the accent of speech are unmistakable.

Arnold's fundamental reason, conscious or unconscious, for the adoption of this colloquial tone and manner, may probably be found in the account of the ultimate purpose of all his writing, given near the close of *Culture and Anarchy;* he aims, not to inculcate an absolutely determinate system of truth, but to stir his readers into the keenest possible self-questioning over the worth of their

[1] *Literature and Dogma*, ed. 1893, p. 321.

stock ideas. "Socrates has drunk his hemlock and is dead; but in his own breast does not every man carry about with him a possible Socrates, in that power of disinterested play of consciousness upon his stock notions and habits, of which this wise and admirable man gave all through his lifetime the great example, and which was the secret of his incomparable influence? And he who leads men to call forth and exercise in themselves this power, and who busily calls it forth and exercises it in himself, is at the present moment, perhaps, as Socrates was in his time, more in concert with the vital working of men's minds, and more effectually significant, than any House of Commons' orator, or practical operator in politics."[1] This dialectical habit of mind is, Arnold believes, best induced and stimulated by the free colloquial manner of writing that he usually adopts.

In the choice of words, however, Arnold is not noticeably colloquial. Less often in Arnold than in Newman is a familiar phrase caught audaciously from common speech and set with a sure sense of fitness and a vivifying effect in the midst of more formal expressions. His style, though idiomatic, stops short of the vocabulary of every day; it is nice — instinctively edited. Certain words are favourites with him, and, as is so often the case with the literary temperament, reveal special preoccupations. Such words are *lucidity*, *urbanity*,

[1] *Culture and Anarchy*, ed. 1883, p. 205.

amenity, fluid (as an epithet for style), *vital, puissant.*

Arnold is never afraid of repeating a word or a phrase, hardly enough afraid of this. His trick of ending one sentence and beginning the next with the same set of words has already been noted. At times, his repetitions seem due to his attempt to write down to his public; he will not confuse them by making them grasp the same idea twice through two different forms of speech. Often, his repetitions come palpably from sheer fondness for his own happy phraseology. His description of Shelley as "a beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain," pleases him so well that he carries it over entire from one essay to another; even a whole page of his writing is sometimes so transferred.

And indeed iteration and reiteration of single phrases or forms of words is a mannerism with Arnold, and at times proves one of his most effective means both for stamping his own ideas on the mind of the public and for ridiculing his opponents. Many of his positive formulas have become part and parcel of the modern literary man's equipment. His account of poetry as "a criticism of life"; his plea for "high seriousness" as essential to a classic; his pleasant substitute for the old English word God — "the not ourselves which makes for righteousness"; "lucidity of mind"; "natural magic" in the poetic treatment of nature;

"the grand style" in poetry; these phrases of his have passed into the literary consciousness and carried with them at least a superficial recognition of many of his ideas.

Iteration Arnold uses, too, as a weapon of ridicule. He isolates some unluckily symbolic phrase of his opponent's, points out its damaging implications or its absurdity, and then repeats it pitilessly as an ironical refrain. The phrase gains in grotesqueness at each return — "sweetening and gathering sweetness evermore" — and, finally, seems to the reader to contain the distilled quintessence of the foolishness inherent in the view that Arnold ridicules. It is in this way that in *Culture and Anarchy* the agitation to "enable a man to marry his deceased wife's sister" becomes symbolic of all the absurd fads of "liberal practitioners." Similarly, when he is criticising the cheap enthusiasm with which democratic politicians describe modern life, Arnold culls from the account of a Nottingham child-murder the phrase, "Wragg is in custody," and adds it decoratively after every eulogy on present social conditions. Or, again, the *Times*, at a certain diplomatic crisis, exhorts the Government to set forth England's claims "with promptitude and energy"; and this grandiloquent, and, under the circumstances, empty phrase becomes, as Arnold persistently rings its changes, irresistibly droll as symbolic of cheap bluster. Whole sentences are often reiterated by

Arnold in this same satirical fashion. Mr. Frederic Harrison, in the course of a somewhat atrabilious criticism, had accused Arnold of being a mere dilettante and of having "no philosophy with coherent, interdependent, subordinate, and derivative principles." This latter phrase, with its bristling array of epithets, struck Arnold as delightfully redolent of pedantry; and, as has already been noted, it recurs again and again in his writings in passages of mock apology and ironical self-depreciation. Readers of *Literature and Science*, too, will remember how amusingly Arnold plays with "Mr. Darwin's famous proposition that 'our ancestor was a hairy quadruped furnished with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in his habits.'" It should be noted that in all these cases the phrase that is reiterated has a symbolic quality, and therefore, in addition to its delicious absurdity, comes to possess a subtly argumentative value.

Akin to Arnold's skilful use of reiteration is his ingenuity in the invention of telling nicknames. On three classes of his fellow-countrymen he has bestowed names that have become generally current, — Barbarians, Philistines, and Populace. The Nonconformist, because of his unyielding sectarianism, he compares to Ephraim, "a wild ass alone by himself." To Professor Huxley, who has been talking of "the Levites of culture," Arnold suggests that "the poor humanist is sometimes apt to regard" men of science as the "Nebuchadnez-

zars" of culture. *The Church and State Review* Arnold dubs "the High Church rhinoceros"; the *Record* is "the Evangelical hyena."

It is interesting to note how often Arnold's satire has a biblical turn. His mind is saturated with Bible history and his memory stored with biblical phraseology; moreover, allusions whether to the incidents or the language of the Bible are sure to be quickly caught by English readers; hence Arnold frequently gives point to his style through the use of scriptural phrases or illustrations. Many of the foregoing nicknames come from biblical sources. The lectures on Homer offer one admirable instance of Scripture quotation. Arnold has been urged to define the grand style. With his customary dislike of abstractions, he protests against the demand. "Alas! the grand style is the last matter in the world for verbal definition to deal with adequately. One may say of it as is said of faith: 'One must feel it in order to know what it is.' But, as of faith, so too we may say of nobleness, of the grand style: 'Woe to those who know it not!' yet this expression, though indefinable, has a charm; one is the better for considering it; *bonum est, nos hic esse;* nay, one loves to try to explain it, though one knows that one must speak imperfectly. For those, then, who ask the question, What is the grand style? with sincerity, I will try to make some answer, inadequate as it must be. For those who ask it

mockingly I have no answer, except to repeat to them with compassionate sorrow, the Gospel words: *Moriemini in peccatis vestris,* Ye shall die in your sins."

An interesting comment on this habit of Arnold's of scriptural phrasing occurs in one of his letters: "The Bible," he says, "is the only book well enough known to quote as the Greeks quoted Homer, sure that the quotation would go home to every reader, and it is quite astonishing how a Bible sentence clinches and sums up an argument. 'Where the State's treasure is bestowed,' etc., for example, saved me at least half a column of disquisition." A moment later he adds a charmingly characteristic explanation as regards his incidental use of Scripture texts: "I put it in the Vulgate Latin, as I always do when I am not earnestly serious." This habit of "high seriousness" in such matters, it is to be feared he in some measure outgrew.

Arnold's fine instinct in the choice of words has thus far been illustrated chiefly as subservient to satire. In point of fact, however, it is subject to no such limitation. Whatever his purpose, he has in a high degree the faculty of putting words together with a delicate congruity that gives them a permanent hold on the memory and imagination. In this power of fashioning vital phrases he far surpasses Newman, and indeed most recent writers except those who have developed epigram and

paradox into a meretricious manner. "A free play of the mind"; "disinterestedness"; "a current of true and fresh ideas"; "the note of provinciality"; "sweet reasonableness"; "the method of inwardness"; "the secret of Jesus"; "the study of perfection"; "the power of conduct, the power of intellect and knowledge, the power of beauty, and the power of social life and manners" — how happily vital are all these phrases! How perfectly integrated! Yet they are unelaborate and almost obvious. Christianity is "the greatest and happiest stroke ever yet made for human perfection." "Burke saturates politics with thought." "Our august Constitution sometimes looks . . . a colossal machine for the manufacture of Philistines." "English public life . . . that Thyestëan banquet of claptrap." The Atlantic cable — "that great rope, with a Philistine at each end of it talking inutilities." These sentences illustrate still further Arnold's deftness of phrasing. But with the last two or three we return to the ironical manner that has already been exemplified.

In his use of figures Arnold is sparing; similes are few, metaphors by no means frequent. It may be questioned whether it is ever the case with Arnold, as with Newman, that a whole paragraph is subtly controlled in its phrasing by the presence of a single figure in the author's mind. Simpler in this respect Arnold's style probably is than even Newman's; its general inferiority to Newman's style in

point of simplicity is owing to the infelicities of tone and manner that have already been noted.

Illustrations, Arnold uses liberally and happily. He excels in drawing them patly from current events and the daily prints. This increases both the actuality of his discussion — its immediacy — and its appearance of casualness, of being a pleasantly unconsidered trifle. For example, the long and elaborate discussion, *Culture and Anarchy*, begins with an allusion to a recent article in the *Quarterly Review* on Sainte-Beuve. *Curiosity* as a habit of mind had been somewhat disparaged in that article, and it is through a colloquial examination of just what is involved in commendable curiosity that Arnold is led to his analysis of *culture*. Later in the same chapter, references occur to such sectarian journals as the *Nonconformist*, and to current events as reported and criticised in their columns. Even in essays dealing with purely literary topics — in such an essay as that on *Eugénie de Guérin* — there is this same actuality. "While I was reading the journal of Mlle. de Guérin," Arnold tells us, "there came into my hands the memoir and poems of a young Englishwoman, Miss Emma Tatham '; and then he uses this memoir to illustrate the contrasts between the poetic traditions of Roman Catholicism and the somewhat sordid intellectual poetry of English sectarian life. This closeness of relation between Arnold's writing and his daily expe-

rience is very noticeable, and increases the reader's sense of the novelty and genuineness and immediacy of what he reads; it conduces to that impression of vitality that is, perhaps, in the last analysis, the most characteristic impression the reader carries away from Arnold's writings.

VIII

And, indeed, the union in Arnold's style of actuality with distinction becomes a very significant matter when we turn to consider his precise relation to his age, for it suggests what is perhaps the most striking characteristic of his personality — his reconciliation of conventionality with fineness of spiritual temper. In this reconciliation lies the secret of Arnold's relation to his romantic predecessors and to the men of his own time. He accepts the actual, conventional life of the every-day world frankly and fully, as the earlier idealists had never quite done, and yet he retains a strain of other-worldliness inherited from the dreamers of former generations. Arnold's gospel of culture is an attempt to import into actual life something of the fine spiritual fervour of the Romanticists with none of the extravagance or the remoteness from fact of those "madmen" — those idealists of an earlier age.

Like the Romanticists, Arnold gives to the imagination and the emotions the primacy in

life; like the Romanticists he contends against formalists, system-makers, and all devotees of abstractions. It is by an exquisite tact, rather than by logic, that Arnold in all doubtful matters decides between good and evil. He keeps to the concrete image; he is an appreciator of life, not a deducer of formulas or a demonstrator. He is continually concerned about what *ought* to be; he is not cynically or scientifically content with the knowledge of what *is*. And yet, unlike the Romanticists, Arnold is *in* the world, and *of* it; he has given heed to the world-spirit's warning, "submit, submit"; he has "learned the Second Reverence, for things around." In Arnold, imaginative literature returns from its romantic quest for the Holy Grail and betakes itself half-humorously, and yet with now and then traces of the old fervour, to the homely duties of every-day life.

Arnold had in his youth been under the spell of romantic poetry; he had heard the echoes of "the puissant hail" of those "former men," whose "voices were in all men's ears." Indeed, much of his poetry is essentially a beautiful threnody over the waning of romance, and in its tenor bears witness alike to the thoroughness with which he had been imbued with the spirit of the earlier idealists and to his inability to rest content with their relation to life and their accounts of it. It is the unreality of the idealists that dissatisfies Arnold, their visionary blindness to fact, their mor-

bid distaste for the actual. Much as he delights in the poetry of Shelley and Coleridge, these qualities in their work seem to him unsound and injurious. Or, at other times, it is the capricious self-will of the Romanticists, their impotent isolation, their enormous egoism, that impress him as fatally wrong. Even in Wordsworth he is troubled by a semi-untruth and by the lack of a courageous acceptance of the conditions of human life. Wordsworth's

> "Eyes avert their ken
> From half of human fate."

Tempered, then, as Arnold was by a deep sense of the beauty and nobleness of romantic and idealistic poetry, finely touched as he was into sympathy with the whole range of delicate intuitions, quivering sensibilities, and half-mystical aspirations that this poetry called into play, he yet came to regard its underlying conceptions of life as inadequate and misleading, and to feel the need of supplementing them by a surer and saner relation to the conventional world of common sense. The Romanticists lamented that "the world is too much with us." Arnold shared their dislike of the world of dull routine, their fear of the world that enslaves to petty cares; yet he came more and more to distinguish between this world and the great world of common experience, spread out generously in the lives of all men; more and more clearly he realized

that the true land of romance is in this region of every-day fact, or else is a mere mirage; that "America is here or nowhere."

Arnold, then, sought to correct the febrile unreality of the idealists by restoring to men a true sense of the actual values of life. In this attempt he had recourse to Hellenic conceptions with their sanity, their firm delight in the tangible and the visible, their regard for proportion and symmetry — and more particularly to the Hellenism of Goethe. Indeed, Goethe may justly be called Arnold's master — the writer who had the largest share in determining the characteristic principles in his theory of life. Goethe's formula for the ideal life — *Im Ganzen, Guten Wahren, resolut zu leben* — sums up in a phrase the plea for perfection, for totality, for wisely balanced self-culture, that Arnold makes in so many of his essays and books.

Allusions to Goethe abound in Arnold's essays, and in one of his letters he speaks particularly of his close and extended reading of Goethe's works.[1] His splendid poetic tributes to Goethe, in his *Memorial Verses* and *Obermann*, have given enduring expression to his admiration for Goethe's sanity, insight, and serene courage. His frankest prose appreciation of Goethe occurs in *A French Critic on Goethe*, where he characterizes him as "the clearest, the largest, the most helpful thinker of modern times; . . . in the width, depth, and

[1] *Letters*, II, 165.

richness of his criticism of life, by far our greatest modern man."[1] It is precisely in this matter of the criticism of life that Arnold took Goethe for master. Goethe, as Arnold saw, had passed through the tempering experiences of Romanticism; he had rebelled against the limitations of actual life (in *Werther*, for example, and *Goetz*), and sought passionately for the realization of romantic dreams; and he had finally come to admit the futility of rebellion and to recognize the treacherous evasiveness of emotional ideals; he had learned the "Second Reverence, for things around." He had found in self-development, in wise self-discipline for the good of society, the secret of successful living. Arnold's gospel of culture is largely a translation of Goethe's doctrine into the idiom of the later years of the century, and the minute adaptation of it to the special needs of Englishmen. There is in Arnold somewhat less sleek paganism than in Goethe — a somewhat more genuine spiritual quality. But the wise limitation of the scope of human endeavour to this world is the same with both; so, too, is the sane and uncomplaining acceptance of fact and the concentration of thought and effort on the pursuit of tangible ideals of human perfection. Goethe tempered by Wordsworth — this is not an unfair account of the derivation of Arnold's ideal.

From one point of view, then, Arnold may fairly

[1] *Mixed Essays*, pp. 233–234.

enough be called the special advocate of conventionality. He recommends and practises conformity to the demands of conventional life. He has none of the pose or the mannerisms of the seer or the bard; he is a frequenter of drawing-rooms and a diner-out, and is fairly adept in the dialect and mental idiom of the frivolously-minded. In all that he writes, "he delivers himself," as the heroine in Peacock's novel urged Scythrop (Shelley) to do, "like a man of this world." He pretends to no transcendental second sight and indulges in none of Carlyle's spinning-dervish jargon. He is never guilty of Ruskin's occasional false sentiment or falsetto rhetoric. The world that he lives in is the world that exists in the minds and thoughts and feelings of the most sensible and cultivated people who make up modern society; the world over which, as its presiding genius, broods the haunting presence of Mr. George Meredith's Comic Spirit. It is "in this world" that "he has hope," in its ever greater refinement, in its ever greater comprehensiveness, in its increasing ability to impose its standards on others. When he half pleads for an English Academy — he never quite pleads for one — he does this because of his desire for some organ by which, in art and literature, the collective sense of the best minds in society assembled may make itself effective. So, too, when he pleads for the Established Church he does this for similar reasons; he is convinced that

it offers by far the best means for imposing widely upon the nation, as a standard of religious experience, what is most spiritual in the lives and aspirations of the greatest number of cultivated people. In many such ways as these, then, Matthew Arnold's kingdom is a kingdom of this world.

And yet, after all, Arnold wears his worldliness with a very great difference. If he be compared, for example, with other literary men of the world, — with Francis Jeffrey or Lord Macaulay or Lockhart, — there is at once obvious in him an all-pervasive quality that marks his temper as far subtler and finer than theirs. His worldliness is a worldliness of his own, compounded out of many exquisite simples. His faith in poetry is intense and absolute. "The future of poetry," he declares, "is immense, because in poetry, where it is worthy of its high destinies, our race, as time goes on, will find an ever surer and surer stay." This declaration contrasts strikingly with Macaulay's pessimistic theory of the essentially make-believe character of poetry — a theory that puts it on a level with children's games, and, like the still more puerile theory of Herr Max Nordau, looks forward to its extinction as the race reaches genuine maturity. Poetry always remains for Arnold the most adequate and beautiful mode of speech possible to man; and this faith, which runs implicitly through all his writing, is plainly the outcome of a mood very different from that of the

ordinary man of the world, and is the expression of an emotional refinement and a spiritual sensitiveness that are, at least in part, his abiding inheritance from the Romanticists. This faith is the manifestation of the ideal element in his nature, which, in spite of the plausible man-of-the-world aspect and tone of much of his prose, makes itself felt even in his prose as the inspirer of a kind of "divine unrest."

In his Preface to his first series of essays Arnold playfully takes to himself the name transcendentalist. To the stricter sect of the transcendentalists he can hardly pretend to belong. He certainly has none of their delight in envisaging mystery; none of their morbid relish for an "*O altitudo!*" provided only the altitude be wrapped in clouds. He believes, to be sure, in a "power not ourselves that makes for righteousness"; but his interest in this power and his comments upon it confine themselves almost wholly to its plain and palpable influence upon human conduct. Even in his poetry he can hardly be rated as more than a transcendentalist *manqué;* and in his prose he is never so aware of the unseen as in his poetry.

Yet, whether or no he be strictly a transcendentalist, Arnold is, in Disraeli's famous phrase, "on the side of the angels"; he is a persistent and ingenious opponent of purely materialistic or utilitarian conceptions of life. "The kingdom of God

is within you"; this is a cardinal point in the doctrine of Culture. The highest good, that for which every man should continually be striving, is an *inner state* of perfection; material prosperity, political enactments, religious organizations — all these things are to be judged solely according to their furtherance of the spiritual well-being of the individual; they are all mere *machinery* — more or less ingenious means for giving to every man a chance to make the most of his life. The true "ideal of human perfection" is "an inward spiritual activity, having for its characters increased sweetness, increased light, increased life, increased sympathy." Arnold's worldliness, then, is a worldliness that holds many of the elements of idealism in solution, that has none of the cynical acquiescence of unmitigated worldliness, that throughout all its range shows the gentle urgency of a fine discontent with fact.

To realize the subtle and high quality of Arnold's genius, one has but to compare him with men of science or with rationalists pure and simple, — with men like Professor Huxley, Darwin, or Bentham. Their carefulness for truth, their intellectual strength, their vast services to mankind, are acknowledged even by their opponents. Yet Arnold has a far wider range of sensibilities than any one of them; life plays upon him in far richer and more various ways; it touches him into response through associations that have a more dis-

tinctively human character, and that have a deeper and a warmer colour of emotion drawn out of the past of the race. In short, Arnold brings to bear upon the present a finer spiritual appreciation than the mere man of the world or the mere man of science — a larger accumulation of imaginative experience. Through this temperamental scope and refinement he is able, while accepting conventional and actual life, to redeem it in some measure from its routine and its commonplace character, and to import into it beauty and meaning and good from beyond the range of science or positive truth. All this comes from the fact that, despite his worldly conformity, he has the romantic ferment in his blood. If his conformity be compared with that of the eighteenth century, — with the worldliness of Swift or Addison, — the transformation wrought by romantic influences is appreciable in all its scope and meaning.

Finally, Arnold makes of life an art rather than a science, and commits the conduct of it to an exquisite tact, rather than to reason or demonstration. The imaginative assimilation of all the best experience of the past — this he regards as the right training to develop true tact for the discernment of good and evil in all practical matters, where probability must be the guide of life. We are at once reminded of Newman's Illative Sense, which was also an intuitive faculty for the dextrous apprehension of truth through the aid of

the feelings and the imagination. But Arnold's new Sense comes much nearer than Newman's to being a genuinely sublimated *Common* Sense. Arnold's own *flair* in matters of art and life was astonishingly keen, and yet he would have been the last to exalt it as unerring. His faith is ultimately in the best instincts of the so-called *remnant* — in the collective sense of the most cultivated, most delicately perceptive, most spiritually-minded people of the world. Through the combined intuitions of such men sincerely aiming at perfection, truth in all that pertains to the conduct of life will be more and more nearly won. Because of this faith of his in sublimated worldly wisdom, Arnold, unlike Newman, is in sympathy with the *Zeitgeist* of a democratic age.

And, indeed, here seems to rest Arnold's really most permanent claim to gratitude and honour. He accepts — with some sadness, it is true, and yet genuinely and generously — the modern age, with its scientific bias and its worldly preoccupations; humanist as he is, half-romantic lover of an elder time, he yet masters his regret over what is disappearing and welcomes the present loyally. Believing, however, in the continuity of human experience, and, above all, in the transcendent worth to mankind of its spiritual acquisitions, won largely through the past domination of Christian ideals, he devotes himself to preserving the quintessence of this ideal life of former generations and

insinuating it into the hearts and imaginations of men of a ruder age. He converts himself into a patient, courageous mediator between the old and the new. Herein he contrasts with Newman on the one hand, and with modern devotees of æstheticism on the other hand. Newman, whose delicately spiritual temperament was subdued even more deeply than Arnold's to Romanticism, shrunk before the immediacy and apparent anarchy of modern life, and sought to realize his spiritual ideals through the aid of mediæval formulas and a return to mediæval conceptions and standards of truth. Exquisite spirituality was attained, but at the cost of what some have called the Great Refusal. A like imperfect synthesis is characteristic of the followers of art for art's sake. They, too, give up common life as irredeemably crass, as unmalleable, irreducible to terms of the ideal. They turn for consolation to their own dreams, and frame for themselves a House Beautiful, where they may let these dreams have their way, "far from the world's noise," and "life's confederate plea." Arnold, with a temperament perhaps as exacting as either of these other temperaments, takes life as it offers itself and does his best with it. He sees and feels its crudeness and disorderliness; but he has faith in the instincts that civilized men have developed in common, and finds in the working of these instincts the continuous, if irregular, realization of the ideal.

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